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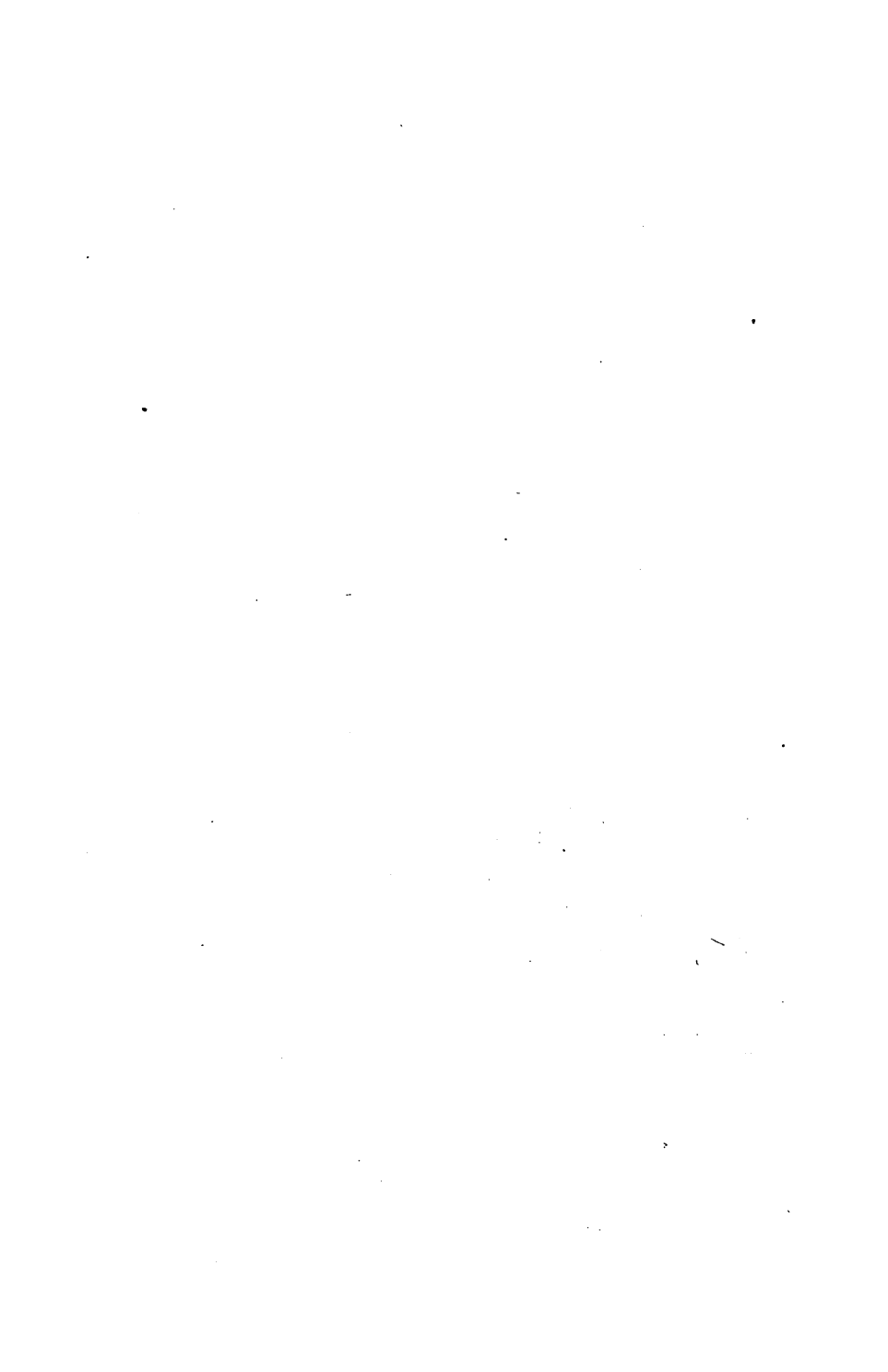
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THE KING OF BATH;

OR,

LIFE AT A SPA IN THE 18TH CENTURY.

A Picture of the Life and Times of Beau Nash.

BY

MRS. HIBBERT WARE,

AUTHOR OF

'DR. HARCOURT'S ASSISTANT,' 'THE HUNLOCK TITLE DEEDS,'

'THE HUNCHBACK CASHIER,' ETC.

SECOND EDITION.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

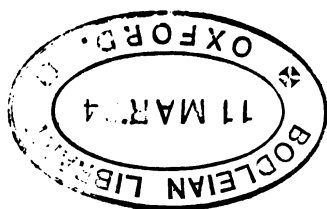
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NOTICE.

THE Authoress considers it proper to intimate that this novel appeared in a leading Bath Journal, during the year 1877; and, at the instance of many residents in the locality, she is encouraged to submit the work to the public, in the present form.

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THE KING OF BATH.



CHAPTER I.

I KNOW WHAT I KNOW.

‘Do you purpose going to Oxford, brother?’

‘No, Winifred ; as soon as I have completed my business here I shall return to Swansea. Trinity Term will soon be over, and then Dick will come home, so ’twould be a useless expense for me to go to Oxford ; and, in good truth, Dick’s extravagances at the University are no slight matter, so it behoves me to save where I can.’

And the speaker gave something like a sigh as he uttered the last few words.

Winifred was a lady of middle age, still beautiful, and with a very animated counte-



nance, set off by a pair of bright, searching hazel eyes. She was short in stature, and with neatly formed, small limbs: she was somewhat hasty and impetuous in temper, as was evidenced by the abrupt way in which she started from her seat, hurried out of the low-latticed casement opening into the garden, and pounced upon a man working amongst the flower-beds, rating him smartly for having rooted up a choice flower along with the weeds.

The garden was large and pleasant, laid out in a cradle walk, and intervening parterres of roses and other flowers. The wide-spreading branches of fine old elms cast cool and pleasant shadows on the sun-lit paths, and the balmy summer breeze, stealing in through the open casement, by which Mrs. Winifred Herbert had passed into the garden, came laden with the sweet perfume of jasmine, which mingled its fragrant blossoms with the broad leaves of the vine clustering around and over the casement.

The chamber itself was spacious, though the ceiling was low, and raftered with heavy

beams of dark oak. The walls being wainscotted with the same wood, gave the room somewhat of a gloomy appearance ; but the dark polished oak floor was covered in the middle with a bright-coloured Turkey-carpet, and the table that stood upon it shone resplendent with white damask napery and dazzling goblets of silver and crystal.

Pushing aside the curtains of red cloth from the casement, Mrs. Herbert's brother watched her altercation with the gardener with an air of some amusement ; then he turned to a youth who had just entered the room, and said : ' Ned, is it possible your mother still keeps old Roger working for her ? Every time she hath written to me, or that I have seen her, for the last seven years, she has been on the point of dismissing him, and yet here he is still.'

Ned shrugged his shoulders, laughed, and, sitting down on one of the tall, highbacked oak chairs, began tuning a violin he had brought in with him, whilst he said, in a jesting tone, ' You know my dear mother will always be an autocrat in her garden,

and she has her own way with old Roger, or thinks she hath, which comes to the same thing, so she'll not dismiss him, though she threatens and scolds, and he argues, in his own stupid obstinate fashion.' Ned was a smart, lively-looking youth, of middle size, with merry blue eyes ; and though his hair was of as reddish a hue as the flaming marigolds which his mother held in her hands as she re-entered the room, his head was unadorned with the huge fashionable perwig of the period.

'Richard,' she said, addressing her brother as she lingered near the casement watching the refractory Roger, 'could you send me a good gardener from Swansea? I am fairly worn out with Roger's insolence and obstinacy, and I am quite determined to part with him.'

'Nay, my dear sister, we have no gardeners in Swansea ; I doubt if any of our labourers would know the difference between a poppy and a Flanders' geranium.'

'You had better put up with Roger, madam,' said Ned, laughing ; 'though he

doth root up marigolds, they are not such rare plants as the Flanders' geranium.'

Here the entrance of the housekeeper, to ask if she should bring a glass of Rhenish and sugar before dinner, changed the current of Mrs. Herbert's thoughts ; and the latter assenting, a footman immediately appeared with two bottles and glasses on a silver salver.

After some further delay, 'My dear Margaret,' said Mrs. Herbert, somewhat impatiently and a little sharply, to a young lady who had just entered the room, 'when will dinner be served ? 'tis very late.'

'Twill be ready in a few minutes now, my dear madam,' said the young lady addressed as Margaret, Mrs. Herbert's companion, who was treated, in truth, more like a daughter of the house. 'Deborah hath had a little accident in the kitchen,' added Margaret, 'but 'twas nothing of great moment. Shall I play a lesson on the harpsichord to fill up the time ?'

'Ay, do, Miss Margaret,' said Mrs. Herbert's brother ; 'and Ned will accompany you on the violin.'

Quite audibly, though in a somewhat quicker and lower tone of voice than that in which she usually spoke, Mrs. Herbert said, as her brother rose to move his chair nearer the harpsichord :

‘Good lack, I hope nothing hath gone amiss with the roast pigeons ; Richard hath such a stomach for them.’

Now, this audible remark needs some explanation, for our readers, unless they have the key to a strange peculiarity of Mrs. Herbert, might often be inclined, in the course of this story, to condemn that lady as singularly wanting in politeness, which she would have been, on this occasion, had she consciously told Richard to his face that he had such a stomach for roast pigeons.

But Mrs. Herbert had a habit of unconsciously speaking her thoughts aloud,—a habit causing some surprise, and also frequently perplexity and embarrassment, to those who were in her company for the first time, and which, if it were on some occasions annoying to her friends, as often furnished them with amusement. Hence it often *happened* that young gentlemen of her

acquaintance, waggishly inclined, would purposely do or say something which they knew she would disapprove of, in order that they might elicit from her the expression of her thoughts on the subject. We must observe, further, that Mrs. Herbert always spoke in a quicker and lower key, and had the appearance of being slightly abstracted when she gave utterance to her thoughts.

‘An admirable finger she hath, and she touches the keys most beautifully,’ observed Mrs. Herbert to her brother, when Miss Margaret had played two or three soft and tender airs. ‘I think, child,’ she added, addressing the young lady, ‘that you are a little out of practice. But now that we have gotten Edward at home you will be more diligent; he hath a manly mellow voice, Richard, and he can sing to Margaret’s playing.’

‘Nothing will please me better,’ said Ned. ‘Do you remember, Margaret, how we used to sing together when we were little?’

All too well did the orphan girl re-

member those past happy days, and hard, very hard was it for her to wear the mask before her kind benefactress, and to keep hidden down deep in the depths of her heart the secret of her unfortunate and hopeless affection for Edward Herbert. Hopeless she could not but deem it. She was a poor dependant on his mother's bounty, and he heir to considerable wealth. She had no reason to believe that he had for her more than a feeling of brotherly affection; and besides, she was some two or three years his senior. These two last circumstances caused her often to experience a sentiment of shame at what she deemed her weakness and folly in nursing an unrequited love, and she felt a shrinking terror lest Mrs. Herbert should ever ascribe the confusion or emotion, which she at times betrayed in Edward's presence, to its right cause.

At length dinner was served, and the first course coming in, Mrs. Herbert's brother gallantly led her to her place at the head of the table, and helping himself to a glass of burgundy, drank to her good health.

The roast pigeons were cooked to perfection, so Mrs. Herbert was satisfied on that score. And when her brother had pleased her by showing that he had his usual stomach for this, his favourite dish, she began to ask him sundry questions, being a lively and voluble little lady.

‘Have you heard anything of your friend, David Lloyd?’

‘Not lately, but I believe he is quite safe.’

‘I was alarmed for him,’ said Mrs. Herbert, ‘when I heard, in May, that the *daughter*’—and the fiery Jacobite lady laid a strong emphasis on the last word, an epithet applied to Queen Mary in sarcasm by the adherents of the unfortunate James II.—‘had caused his name to be placed on the list of those to be apprehended. Lord Newburgh and Sir John Fenwick and several others are apprehended.’

‘You have had all the militia called out, have you not, sister?’

‘Ay, to be sure, there was the militia of Westminster, and the militia of London, and my Lord Bedford, and my Lord Mayor,

and the City Colonels commanding; and the *daughter* sent for three regiments of foot from Holland, all to fight against the king, her poor old father, and to prevent his landing to try to get his own again. And there has been such eagerness by all the Whigs to show their loyalty to Hogan Mogan, or rather their treachery to King James, as if they had not had chances enough already of fawning on the Dutch boor, who despises them all the time for their cringing. I wish to heaven he would stay in Holland, for it seems he can hardly keep away from it for two months together.'

'Tis well the walls have not ears, uncle, when my mother so boldly wishes King William to remain amid his native dykes, and styles him Hogan Mogan and a Dutch boor.'

'Your uncle thinks as I do, Ned,' said Mrs. Herbert, though, at the same time, she looked somewhat suspiciously at her brother, and not without good reason, for, in truth, he was but a very lukewarm Jacobite.

'Brother,' she went on to say, 'you must

‘speak to that lad of yours at Oxford, for by what Ned tells me, he has not very loyal feelings towards his lawful king.’

‘Well, well, sister,’ replied her brother, ‘he had best keep clear of politics ; one way or another, he is like to be poor enough, without dissipating his substance in that fashion. I think I have worse faults to complain of in the young dog than lukewarmness in a fallen cause.’

‘Pr’ythee, brother, what are they? Have you heard anything?’ asked the lady, exchanging meaning glances with her son.

‘I was alluding to his extravagance, Winifred.’

‘Oh, is that all?’ said the lady, carelessly. ‘’Tis a common failing with young men, and ’twill wear off in time. Margaret, help me to a little of that burred veal, and Ned, fill your uncle’s goblet. He prefers Rhenish ; do not offer him sack.’

‘Nay, sister, Dick’s extravagance is no light matter for me, I’ll assure you ; an’ he goes on in this fashion, I shall be ruined—that will be the end on’t.’

Here there was a slight pause in the conversation, and Mrs. Herbert, gazing abstractedly at her plate, said, in her quick minor key :

‘How foolish brother Richard is, to be sure ; just like all men, when they begin to get into years, he quite forgets he was once young himself.’

‘I am sure there is going to be a thunderstorm,’ exclaimed Margaret, hoping to save Richard the pain of hearing any more such reflections from his sister, by introducing a fresh subject of conversation.

‘What nonsense you talk, child,’ replied Mrs. Herbert, ‘there’s not a cloud in the sky.’ Then, after another pause, she added, in her undertone, her thoughts having fallen into the former groove again, ‘Such nonsense ! when he was courting my poor sister, he had a new coat for every day in the week. I know what I know ; and he might grizzle, an’ he knew all that we know.’

Mr. Richard, who had smiled at the first part of his sister’s remark, looked grave at the last, but was left to puzzle over

what it might signify, and he could not help feeling a disagreeable impression that his relatives knew of something particularly unpleasant about his son Dick.

He now relapsed into silence, and Master Ned and Miss Margaret, seeing how disturbed he was, tried to divert his thoughts by introducing various lively topics of conversation.

The more solid portion of the dinner being now over, the dessert was served, and the healths of absent friends toasted in burgundy and Rhenish. A dish of large ripe strawberries gave Mrs. Herbert a pleasant theme to dilate upon, as they were the produce of her own garden, and she boasted that none finer were to be procured in London.

‘Here, at least, then, Winifred, you have something to thank old Roger for,’ observed the lady’s brother, in a playful tone, joining at length in the conversation.

‘Why yes, Richard, ’tis true he doth keep our table well supplied with the best fruits, but I have to look after him early

and late ; an' I did not, things would soon go to sixes and sevens in the garden, and we should have small reason to boast of our fruits and vegetables. Margaret, give me one of those Naples' biscuits, and take a glass of sack, child. You neither eat nor drink. I know not what ails you lately. Ned, you must see what you can do with her—she is beyond me.'

'I will give her some riding lessons,' replied Ned, gaily. 'A good canter along the lanes and high roads from here to Highgate and Hampstead would do her most good.'

'Nay,' interposed Margaret, trying to master her emotion, 'Mrs. Herbert was talking of a visit to Swansea, and if aught ails me, and I doubt if aught does, some rambles amongst the mountains will soon cure me.'

'Do you really think of coming to Swansea, 'Winifred?' asked her brother. 'Tis pleasant news. Dick will be delighted to act as cavalier to Margaret, and we two old folk will enjoy ourselves in our own

fashion. But Ned, I beg your pardon, I forgot you for a moment ; I must find some young Welsh lady for you to gallant, as I have made Dick over to Margaret.'

'All very well, brother,' remarked Mrs. Herbert; then she added, in her thoughtful undertone, as though to herself, 'But I could tell you another story. I know what I know. Master Dick would a deal sooner be acting escort to Miss Threadneedle. The foolish lad! 'tis to be hoped the sly baggage will not entrap him.'

All unconscious of the sudden agitation and anger she had aroused in her brother's breast, of Margaret's vain attempt to catch her eye, and Ned's equally vain effort to create a diversion by slashing at a wasp with his fruit knife, the lady continued to gaze abstractedly at the confits on her plate, and to speak her thoughts.

'If what Ned says be true,' she continued, in her quick undertoned manner, 'that rascally tailor is trying hard to get the poor silly boy for a son-in-law. I must give Richard a broad hint in some way.'

‘Thank you, no, Ned, I will take no more wine,’ aid Mr. Richard, as his nephew invited him to try some sack. ‘So,’ he said, turning to his sister with a reproachful look, ‘a fine snare my graceless son is like to be caught in! I wonder, Winifred, you should not have explained a matter of so much moment to me so soon as I arrived. I must set out at sunrise to-morrow for Oxford.’

‘What do you mean, brother?’ asked Mrs. Herbert, somewhat bewildered, for she was not conscious of the revelation she had just made.

‘Nay, uncle, do not look so grave,’ said Ned, laughing, ‘my cousin is only amusing himself, and ’tis not likely that anything serious will happen, for the girl or woman is older than he is, and he must see, an’ he hath not lost all common sense, that she and her parents are trying to entrap him.’

‘The wretch! the forward baggage! older than himself! Brother, d’ye hear that?’ exclaimed Mrs. Herbert, eagerly

joining in the conversation, now that she found it had turned upon Dick's love affair, though how the revelation had been made to her brother she scarce knew.

‘She must be a designing creature!’ exclaimed Margaret, in a voice of mingled pain and excitement, ‘to try and snare a mere boy like Dick; I wonder how he came to know a person of her class.’

‘Oh, he must have made her acquaintance in her father's shop,’ replied Ned. ‘Many of the students go to old Threadneedle's. He has made Dick look quite a beau, I'll assure you.’

‘Nice news for me!’ groaned Dick's unfortunate sire.

‘Did Dick often see the artful baggage, Ned?’ asked Mrs. Herbert. ‘She is some painted dirt, I'll warrant.’

‘Pretty often,’ replied Ned. ‘He took me to the shop in High Street two or three times. But, uncle, I should not fidget myself at all about the matter, were I you, for I don't believe Dick can be in earnest. He must see through Miss Nan's

schemes ; and as for her parents, they are vulgar and sordid enough, particularly the father, to disgust any gentleman.'

'Especially one who hath the blood of the Poweys in his veins,' said Mrs. Herbert, in a lofty tone ; for she never forgot that she was the niece of that gallant Colonel Powey who had defended Pembroke Castle against Oliver Cromwell, and who had suffered death in consequence. 'No ; when I think of that,' she added, 'I am inclined to believe, brother, that Dick would not so far disgrace himself, or the memory of his gallant uncle, as to ally himself to a tailor.'

Master Dick's father did not seem, however, to draw any hope from this last suggestion, for, if truth must be told, he had sometimes ridiculed his sister's veneration for the family of the Poweys, and he had considerable doubts whether the admixture of their blood in his son's veins would suffice to extinguish the passion of the youthful student for the tailor's fair daughter.

‘I shall go to Oxford to-morrow, Winifred,’ said the irate father, in emphatic tones. ‘I shall nip this affair in the bud, an it be not in full bloom, which heaven forbid! and I shall at once remove Dick from the University, and place him in some position where at least he may not have such chances of bringing his poor old father to beggary in his latter days.’

And so the next morning, soon after the sun had risen, Mr. Richard quitted his sister’s house in Great Queen Street, and rode on his way to Oxford, accompanied for some few miles by his nephew.

CHAPTER II.

SPORTING HIS OAK.

THE walls of Jesus' College at Oxford had not had time as yet to grow blackened and crumbling, like many of the other old colleges and halls of learning encompassing it ; for we open our tale in the year of grace 1692, and then little more than a century had elapsed since its erection, when Queen Elizabeth took to herself the credit of laying this Cambrian foundation, though she in some measure compensated the real founder, Dr. Price, for thus taking unto herself a merit which was really his, by the assistance and support she gave him. Amongst other benefactions, he received from this royal and termagant lady a grant of timber

from the forests of Shotover and Stowe; and so, in course of years, Jesus' College rose up, and intermingled its shadows with those of the time-honoured walls of Exeter, on the other side of Turl Street.

And many Welsh students came and went, and drew stores of learning at the fount of this, their own peculiar College. And amongst others, about two years before the date we have just named, there had arrived a certain young gentleman from Swansea, intended by his father to adorn one of the learned professions, the latter fancying that he discerned much genius and ability in this son of his. And, indeed, the father's hopes might not have been altogether disappointed, for report said that the youth was sure to be made a Master of Arts in due time, for he always made a much lower bow to the Fellows of the University, whenever he passed them, than any of the other undergraduates did !

The young gentleman, therefore, fancying that he was certain of his degree, or, what is perhaps as likely, not considering that he

was called upon to hurt his health by too severe application to study, spent much of his time at the tea-tables of the daughters of tailors, perruquiers, bootmakers, and other young ladies of that class at Oxford, who styled themselves misses, and equipped in capuchins, white gowns, soiled silk shoes, with high red heels, and long muslin ruffles, took the air in the Broad Walk every Sunday, to make conquests, and receive their admirers all the rest of the week at their tea-tables. Now our young collegian, being very good-natured and agreeable, had a large acquaintance amongst these ladies, and, indeed, was very successful as a lady's man, if one might judge from their little artifices to attract him to them.

The young student had rooms on an upper story in Jesus College, and their mullioned windows looked down upon the smooth plot of green turf adorning the middle of the first quadrangle.

Here, secure, as he thinks, from all intrusion, sits, or rather stands, this boy student of eighteen summers, one warm, radiant

June afternoon, very busy, though not in such fashion as his father might have anticipated ; for the books he possesses are reposing quietly on their shelves, and he is engaged in the important task of decorating his person. This was, indeed, an important task to him then, and at all times. His peculiar characteristics were even now pretty strongly developed. He possessed a certain amount of genius, some talents, though not of the kind his father fondly hoped that he had. He was destined to make a name in the world, and hand his name down to posterity, yet not by the performance of any great acts and deeds, either civil or military. There was, in fine, a strange mixture of common sense, such as it was, genius, and folly, in the character of our hero, for such he is ; but we prefer that our readers should form their own judgment of him by his conduct and actions, only we think that this much they will allow him, spite of all his follies—the merit of a most tender and humane heart.

But, meanwhile, we have left the young

gentleman standing, engaged in the nice process of carefully adjusting his long stockings, which are drawn up, in accordance with the rules of fashion, to the middle of the thigh. It was a slightly tedious process apparently, and required careful manipulation, perhaps from fear of rending the hose ; then the weather was warm, and the young student looked flushed and excited, and somewhat provoked, too, when there came, suddenly, a thundering knock at his door.

‘ Who is there ? ’ he cried, suspending his operations for a moment, wondering who could be so wanting in tact as to disturb him when the strong outside oaken door of his rooms was closed.

‘ Halloa, Dick, you lazy dog ! ’ replied a laughing voice, ‘ haven’t you done adorning your person yet ? The adorable Miss Nanhath been walking this hour past in the Physic Garden, awaiting your coming. Harcourt saw her there ; and just now I thought I spied the disconsolate fair one peeping in at the gateway ; an one of the

beadles spies the poor wretch, 'twill be the worse for her and for you.'

'You need not think to deceive me with your stuff and nonsense, Phil,' replied our hero, in an apparently unconcerned tone, though at the same time he took a furtive glance from behind the window curtain down into the sunny quadrangle, where, however, no female form was visible, but three squire beadles, bearing large silver gilt maces, were escorting, not an intruding female, but a lecturer who was going to his school.

'Well, ta, ta !' shouted Phil from the landing, 'you are always *sporting the oak* now. But for this we are indebted to the charming Miss Nan.'

And Phil went whistling away down stairs, after this allusion to the fact of his friend's so often shutting up his rooms and exhibiting the panels of his outer door, or, as the saying was, *sporting his oak*.

Being no longer disturbed, Dick now proceeded with his toilet. He had put on a fine laced waistcoat, reaching half way down

his thighs, and a velvet coat, with large hanging cuffs, in the extreme of fashion, and had arranged, with great nicety, his cravat of Flanders lace, which he wore of so great a length, that he was obliged to draw the ends through the button holes of his waistcoat. Then he sat himself down, to comb out the long flowing ringlets of his monstrous periwig, and as he did so, his eye fell on an open letter, resting on the little table of cypress wood at which he had placed himself, and a look of trouble and concern spread itself over his harsh, strong, and peculiarly irregular features. Dick had a tender heart, as we have said, and he loved his father, so he could not be insensible to the sad paternal admonitions and pathetic remonstrances contained in this letter, which he had received that morning.

The troubled father complained bitterly, in his missive, of the ruinous length of a tailor's bill he had had to pay for his son Dick, who, he declared, would bring him to beggary, and, to judge from the splendour of the young college gallant's gold embroid-

ered scarlet waistcoat and blue velvet coat, richly silver-laced—for, tasteless in dress, he always equipped his large and awkward, and somewhat clumsy person in garments whose colours were ever ill-assorted—that bill must have been a long one indeed.

Room enough for uneasiness, in truth, had Master Dick, for if the bill his father had already settled had been a heavy one, he knew he had contracted one far heavier, and that he was debtor to Nan's father, Mr. Threadneedle, a fashionable and expensive tailor in the High Street, to an amount which he could not think of without a shudder. True, since the gay young collegian had shown a decided preference to the tailor's fair daughter, over Miss Polly of the Bull Inn, Miss Nelly, the brazier's daughter, and all the other young ladies of fashion in the University, and had begun to pay special and marked attentions to the charming Miss Nan Threadneedle, her fond sire had always dismissed the subject of Dick's liabilities—which, to say the truth, the latter never even hinted at, except when a new

coat was wanted—with a graceful and magnificent wave of the hand, as if quite indifferent as to whether his young customer ever paid him or not.

Nevertheless, Dick had a keen idea that the generous tailor (though, perhaps, only from the force of habit) never failed to enter in his ledger the numerous splendid articles of apparel which he, the gay young collegian, had ordered of him, and that they would figure in a long bill should anything occur to disturb the course of true love betwixt himself and Miss Nan.

Poor youth! sore troubled did he look, though he could not help gazing admiringly on his gay apparel, as he carefully concealed it under his student's flowing black gown, which, if he had dared, he would gladly have dispensed with, that he might parade his fine clothes in the eyes of the belles of the town. But there was no alternative, so he stuck his academical cap on the top of his huge periwig. Poor youth! he knew with what dangers his path was bestrewn. Alas for his little love affair! Nan's

father was rich, very rich certainly ; but he was mean and mercenary, and, to crown all, a tailor ! His own sire was poor, proud, and a gentleman. Here were conflicting elements with a vengeance.

Thrusting the paternal letter into his pocket, the young student hastily quitted his room, bent upon dismissing all these unpleasant reflections as to the future from his mind, and enjoying the present with Miss Nan. No Nan was peeping in at the gate of the quadrangle, nor did he see her when he turned into High Street, but Phil was standing under the shadow of the beautiful Church of St. Mary's, and jocularly bid him make haste, or Nan would be gone ; and a little further on Harcourt, loitering with a friend at the gate of University College, issued the same injunction. But Nan was not gone : she awaited his coming on Magdalen Bridge, where she stood in a semi-circular recess, watching the flow of the two rivers beneath, where, divided by a broad patch of meadow land, the Cherwell and the Thames wound along,

the former past banks fringed with willows, and the latter overhung by foliage so dense that the waters were buried in shadow, save where here and there the glassy surface flashed like burnished silver where a broad ray of sunlight streamed through the leafy branches of the elms.

To impartial eyes, Miss Nan was a good-looking, but somewhat coarse and vulgar young woman, who might have been any age from five-and-twenty to five-and-thirty, but was certainly some years the senior of her young admirer.

She had blue black hair and black eyes, with cheeks as red as a damask rose, and with a nose, inherited from her father, slightly inclined to turn up. Of course, in Dick's eyes she was perfection, for Dick, like most boys, was flattered by the preference given him by a fine-looking woman. Indeed, to say the truth, Miss Nan was a belle and a toast at the convivial wine parties of the young students ; for what young woman, with a fine person and a pretty face, and possessing, or supposed to

possess, a prodigious fortune, could fail of having a number of admirers? Miss Nan attended plays and concerts, and when, on the strength of her pretty fortune, she was admitted to a public assembly and permitted to dance among ladies of position, she was considered by everyone as a spritely young lady. But though she was as anxious to step out of her own rank and make a good and genteel match as her parents were to see the accomplishment of that event, miss was, at heart, a thorough flirt, and incapable of being inspired with feelings of love, and was never so well satisfied as when she was gallanted about by a number of those who went by the name of pretty fellows, be they rakes, men of honour, wits or fools, or men or boys, just as any fell in her way. Thus it was, as time slipped on, miss advanced in years, if not in sense; though she had now, at length, begun to perceive that if she intended to enter the marriage state no more time was to be lost: hence she determined set that was now made at Dick, as well by miss as by her parents.

Miss Nan showed the greatest satisfaction at her lover's arrival. They entered the Botanical Gardens, then called the Physic Garden; but they were not the only company in that pleasant resort, for as they sauntered together along its winding paths and over its grass plots, soft as velvet, and shaded by the wide-spreading branches of leafy beaches, or the drooping boughs of weeping willows, ever and anon they met some of the academic misses, attended by their gallants: at one turn of the walks they met Miss Dolly Smith, the boot-maker's daughter, at another the two Misses Higson, whose father kept the coffee-house in High Street, and then they came full plump upon Miss Sally Frizzle, the barber's daughter, flirting with all her might with a young gentleman commoner. These would-be young ladies of fashion in the University saluted Miss Nan with the greatest respect, but that amiable young lady, presuming on her pretty fortune, her heirship to a fashionable tailor, and the toleration which these advantages had pro-

cured for her in polite society, scarcely condescended to acknowledge their salutations. Had she been at the elbows of these female friends and acquaintances, she would have heard such ejaculations as—‘that stuck-up Nan Threadneedle!’—‘that saucy minx!’—‘that painted dirt!’—‘that Miss Confidence!’—‘how old she looks!’ and so forth.

At length Miss Nan and her young college gallant thought fit to rest themselves, and they sat down on a rustic seat from which they inhaled the sweet scent of rich-coloured wall-flowers, trumpet honeysuckle, mignonette, and roses. These furnished a pretty theme for Master Dick’s ecstasies: he styled his mistress the Queen of Roses, sweet as mignonette, his divine Nan, his charming, his adorable Nan; and under the influence of his flame, uttered many like flatteries, apparently, not unpalatable to the tailor’s fair heiress.

The two lovers stayed until the shadows were growing long in the garden; then they repaired to Nan’s home in the High Street, to sup on something more sub-

stantial than the perfume of flowers and love.

Mrs. Threadneedle had prepared a very nice, savoury little supper for the expected guest, whom both she and her husband were keenly desirous of securing for their daughter as a very desirable match, for they were under the impression that Master Dick was the son not only of a gentleman, but of a gentleman of a good estate—an erroneous impression this, so far as regarded his father's worldly means, which Dick had never taken any particular pains to correct.

Mr. Threadneedle was a rather mean-looking, under-sized man, who had made his own fortune, had sat cross-legged on the board, and wielded the shears himself, and who had even yet the habit of making certain allusions to his trade sometimes, in a manner very galling to the feelings of his accomplished daughter: for accomplished she was in the eyes of her admiring parents; she could dance tolerably, she could read a little French and speak a few words of

that fashionable language with an English accent, she talked glibly of her winnings and losings at brag, of the prices of silks, the newest fashions, the best hair-dresser, the scandal at those gossiping places, the milliners' and mantua-makers' shops, and so forth.

'Come, sit ye all down,' said Mrs. Threadneedle, in a very energetic tone, 'thof it be June, we'll not let our victuals get cold; and here be two boiled ducks, as plump and fine as e'er were cooked, and buttered pease that will melt in your mouth.'

Miss Nan, however, was not ready to take her place immediately, for she chose to retire and make sundry little changes in her dress before sitting down to table, probably from a very natural desire to look as bewitching as possible in the eyes of her lover. If this were her object, she appeared fully to have achieved it, for he gazed at her when she again entered the room with eyes brimful of love and rapture.

'Ods heartikins, Nan, what a long time you have been!' cried Mrs. Threadneedle,

in a tone of some displeasure; 'the ducks and pease are gotton quite cold, and Master Richard will not thank ye.'

Master Richard hastened to assure Mrs. Threadneedle that he cared very little about supper, and he had only regretted Miss Nan's absence, because even a few brief moments seemed an age from his lovely charmer.

'Let 'em sit together, dame,' said the tailor, chuckling, 'and sup off love, an they will, but you and I will fall to upon the ducks.'

With as much simpering and bashfulness as though she had been a miss in her teens, Nan took her place beside her lover, and whilst her father was dismembering the ducks, she begged Master Dick's opinion as to her new gown, a sky blue taffeta, made in the new fashion, with a stomacher and tight sleeves, with large cuffs above the elbows, in imitation of the coats of gentlemen, from under which fell a profusion of lace in the shape of ruffles.

The dress was handsome enough, but its

delicate hue rendered it far from becoming to the wearer, who, with her coarse dark skin and red cheeks, would have looked better in dark, sombre colours. However, Dick was a lover, and love is blind ; so the amorous lad broke out in rapturous enthusiasm, protesting his mistress looked divine, enchanting, charming, and ended by vowing that the dress only increased her loveliness, a consummation which he swore he had not thought possible, and that, above all things, he liked to see the fair sex elegantly and fashionably attired.

‘ Ads my life !’ cried out the tailor, laughing, ‘ you’ll tell another story when that young baggage is yer wife ; you’ll not be so fond of seeing new gowns then.’

‘ La, father !’ replied the young baggage, who had covered her face with her fan for a moment, to hide her blushes from her lover, at this allusion to their future relationship, ‘ I protest, sir, Master Dick would never grudge me what he doth not deny to himself. He dresses gaily, he is one of the first of the fashion, and for every

new gown my mantua-maker sendeth me, he hath a couple of fine laced coats. Master Dick is a gentleman of wit and pleasure.' And as she said this, the lady cast a languishing eye on her lover.

Poor Dick ! How he groaned in spirit at this allusion to his coats, bringing, as it did, to his guilty recollection the great sum that must be standing to his debit in the tailor's books. The conversation dropped for a second, and Dick seemed at a loss how to re-open it, and the only way he could think of was to pull out his gold snuff-box and present it open to his mistress : 'Do you take snuff, miss ?' Then, recovering himself, he averred that he should never think anything too rich or too costly for his adored Miss Nan.'

'Well, well,' said the tailor, 'she'll have a little trifling matter of £40,000 when I die ; 'twill keep her in ribbons and laces, at least.'

'Miss Nan is a fortune in herself !' exclaimed Master Dick, casting a glance full of endearment at the young lady ; 'an she had not a penny, she would be as welcome

to me as though she had the dowry of a princess.'

'Ay, very true, but how about the old gentleman?' asked the tailor, with a cunning look; 'your father, I mean? I don't think he would be so willing for you to take my girl without a penny.'

Dick only looked confused, and made no answer, for he felt painfully impressed with the idea that even £40,000 would perhaps not reconcile his sire to his son's marriage with the daughter of a tailor.

'By-the-bye, how is the old gentleman? all in the dumps I suppose,' said Master Threadneedle.

'Not that I am aware of,' replied Dick, rather sharply, and not over well pleased to hear his father spoken of so familiarly.

'Why, you've told me he was a Jacobite, and so I thought he might be put out by the ill-luck of his friend James, King of England that was, and who has gone silly, so they say, since the mounseers he had gotten to help him were beaten at Cape la Hogue.'

‘La, papa, don’t begin to talk about battles!’ interrupted Miss Nan, who saw that her lover was displeased; for though no staunch Jacobite, he still shared some of his father’s preference for the ill-fated King James. ‘Sure we can find something pleasanter to talk about. Pr’ythee, Master Dick,’ she added, turning to her lover, ‘an you admired my gown, what think you of my coiffure? I have somewhat altered the fashion of it; do you find it too high?’

Miss Nan’s hair was combed up from the forehead like a rising billow, and surmounted by piles of ribbon and lace, disposed in regular and alternate tiers, which rose to a formidable height; but as this structure was not more lofty than Master Dick’s own periwig, he could hardly have disapproved of it, even had he not been in love.

‘Those high top-knots are divine, and ’tis a most becoming head-dress, Miss Nan; but truly, I had not noticed it before, because the brilliancy of your eyes kept my gaze enthralled, my charming miss.’

‘Oh la! Master Dick, fie upon you, for a base flatterer!’ said Miss Nan, giving him a playful rap on the shoulder with her fan, and pretending to feel offended, whilst the tailor and his wife applauded this lover-like speech.

‘To how many Welsh ladies,’ continued miss, casting a languishing look on Dick, ‘will you make the same compliment, when you are far away from Oxford, and have quite forgotten your friends, and poor Nan amongst the number?’

Here Nan paused and sighed, and even squeezed out a tear.

‘Forget you, Miss Nan! Forget you, my charmer! I were as like to forget my own existence. Each moment that I am away from your side seems an age, and I know not how I shall bear myself away from Oxford; ’twill be like rending my heart-strings.’

Here Master Dick looked the picture of despair.

‘La, Master Dick!’ cried out miss, ‘how mighty prettily you talk.’

‘Good lack!’ exclaimed sympathising Mrs. Threadneedle, ‘and why should you go away, Master Dick? You love our girl, and she loves you, and I don’t think my good man here would mind your getting wed at once.’

Dick looked eagerly at Miss Nan. He was so much infatuated and so much in love, that, irrespective of consequences, he would have married miss there and then, had it been possible; as it was, he pressed her hand to his lips and murmured something about angels and a glimpse into Paradise.

‘Softly, good dame!’ said astute Master Threadneedle, shaking his head at his wife; ‘I shall be as well content as you to call Master Dick my son, but still we must think a bit about our daughter. I don’t disbelieve, of course, a word he says about the property his father will leave to him, but there’s nothing like having everything clear and straightforward, and so I should like to make a journey to Swansea and see the old gentleman myself.’

Master Dick absolutely shuddered at this declaration, picturing to himself with horror the advent of the tailor at his father's house at Swansea, whilst Nan, thinking by his altered demeanour that he was displeased at her father's implying any doubt of his veracity, cried out :

‘ You are always thinking of vile money, father. I am sure I don't care a bit for it. I would rather be poor and begging my bread by the road-side, and be loved ’ (she said in a lower key, casting at the same time a tender glance on Dick), ‘ than be ever so rich and uncared for.’

‘ Hoity, toity ! Hey day ! daughter. Vile money, indeed ! Marry come up, I say ! Very fine prate, truly,’ growled the tailor. ‘ Go teach your grandmother to crack filberts. I know what's what, and so let me tell you, that with your extravagant tastes you would be no wife for a poor man, so you need not put yourself into a frustration because your father talks a little common sense. However, that don't argufy ; I dare say 'twill be all right

when me and the old gentleman at Swansea hob-nob together.'

Dick had an inward conviction that instead of being all right it would be all wrong; and that the sun was as like to fall from the sky, as his father to hob-nob with a tailor: however, he drowned all his misgivings, not in good wine, but in goblets of Dorchester beer; for the stingy tailor always made a point of assuring his guests that snares were laid for our lives in everything we ate and drank, and that what passed for wine amongst us was not juice of the grape, but an adulterated mixture of all sorts of villainous compounds, and that the only wholesome beverage in England was Dorchester table-beer.

After basking a while longer in the smiles of his amiable mistress, Dick quitted the tailor's house, all unconscious of the avalanche about to fall on his devoted head.

CHAPTER III.

MEDUSA'S HEAD.

ABOUT the same time that Master Dick had sat down to supper in the tailor's house in High Street, a gentleman, mounted on horseback, had drawn his bridle for a few moments on the outskirts of Oxford, and halted as though to gaze at the beautiful old city before entering it.

And very beautiful Oxford looked on that bright June evening : a city of spires, the tall and elegantly-pointed pinnacles, square grey towers, and magnificent domes towering far above the house-tops, lit up with the dying glories of the setting sun, which tinged with magic radiance the surrounding landscape, where elms of giant

growth, their trunks fringed and shrouded with foliage from base to summit, encircling the old city, seemed to keep watch and ward over it. At length, urging his horse on again, the traveller entered Oxford by Castle Street. He appeared to be a man of sixty or thereabouts, tall of stature, with a frame well-knit, and remarkably handsome. His garments were plain, but good in quality, and fashionably made, though avoiding any preposterous extreme in mode or cut, and he wore his own hair, which was an iron-grey.

He rode down Castle Street, Queen Street, and High Street, scanning, with some attention, the shops in the latter thoroughfare.

The houses were all old and irregularly built, some tall and some very low, with peaked gable ends and over-hanging stories, the windows of various shapes—bow windows, and oriel windows, and long ranges of mullion windows—all filled with tiny panes of glass, some square, some lozenge-shaped. Suddenly the traveller halted again; he

had evidently discovered the house he was in search of, and that house was the house of Master Threadneedle.

A very ominous frown contracted the brows of the stranger as he gazed at the grey and blackened walls of the old tenement in which the tailor carried on his trade.

Over the shop front was suspended from a pole, which projected into the street, the sign, which swayed gently to and fro in the evening breeze. It was no great work of art—a stupendous pair of shears were depicted astride, as though in the act of cutting a piece of broadcloth. Possibly the mediocrity of the painting may have elicited the grim smile with which the traveller turned away and went once more on his road.

He now repaired to Corn Market Street, dismounted at the wide entrance of the handsome old inn called the Roebuck, gave his horse to an ostler, ordered a room and supper to be prepared for two, and then, setting off on foot, he soon reached Ship

Street, turned down the narrow thoroughfare, full of quaint old houses, and from it emerged in front of Jesus' College. He at once entered the first quadrangle, and after making some inquiries of a stout little beadle, presently repaired to Master Dick's chambers, to see, however, only a closed door, for Dick was still 'sporting the oak.' Disappointed, apparently, at finding the young gentleman out, the traveller repaired again to the Roebuck, supped, made some little change in his apparel, and then betook himself once more to Jesus' College, where Master Dick, just returning from the tailor's, very much elated with love and Dorchester beer, found him pacing about in the quadrangle.

Had the stranger borne the fabled face of Medusa, the sight of him could hardly have inspired Master Dick with more terror, and he seemed, for a moment, literally turned into stone.

'Well, lad, thou seem'st inclined to give me but a poor reception,' said the traveller, in somewhat harsh tones.

'The surprise is so great, sir, so unexpected,' stammered Dick. 'Believing you, my dear father, to be in London, I could hardly trust my own eyes when I saw you in the quadrangle: but the pleasure is all the greater,' continued Dick, with a culpable disregard of truth, 'having come upon me unawares.'

'I' faith, Dick,' replied his sire, as he took his son's hand, 'you have a strange way of showing satisfaction, then, for when you first caught sight of me, you looked for a moment or two confoundedly like a poor wretch on his way to Tyburn. What ails thee, lad?'

Dick tried to laugh, but his mirth sounded rather forced, and a sort of nervous twitch was perceptible on his face.

'I came here so soon as I entered Oxford,' said his father, 'and I would have had you come and sup with me at the Roebuck, but I found you were away, and your rooms locked up.'

'Well, sir, I will come with you to the

Roebuck now ; an you will walk on slowly, I will overtake you.'

'No my dear lad, I would rather rest in your rooms awhile ; I have supped.'

Dick was rather taken aback at this reply, his object being to strip off a part of his finery before his father should see it, for he had noticed a glance of strong disapprobation directed by the paternal eye upon the unfortunate periwig.

But his sire did not confine his disapproval to glances only, for on reaching the landing, whilst Dick was unlocking his door, he hitched up the lofty head structure with his cane, and said :

'My poor lad, why have you stuck this dome on your head ? You have but a plain face, Dick, and when you follow grotesque and absurd fashions, they only make your want of good looks more conspicuous.'

'I see, sir, you are in a mood for pleasantries to-night,' replied the son, in a somewhat mortified and indignant tone.

'Am I, egad ? If I am, I may be held

excused in one way, lad, for I know my pocket must suffer. I shall have to pay smart for this monstrous periwig, if I have not done so already.'

Poor Dick winced. If all these pleasantries were made over the periwig, what would be said anent the laced coat and waistcoat hidden under his black gown? In a fit of desperation, he flung off the latter and stood erect, though, it must be owned, with beating heart, before his astonished parent.

'Lord ha' mercy, Dick! What sort of masquerading is this? Hast been to a pageant?'

'You are in a humour for jesting, sir, to-night,' replied Dick, stoutly, becoming imbued with a certain audacity born of despair; for he felt convinced now, that some cogent reason had brought his father to Oxford, and a guilty conscience whispered that Miss Nan was connected with the visit.

'Twill be no jest to me, when Mr. Threadpaper, or Threadneedle, or whatever else you call that rascally tailor, sends me

in a bill as long as my arm. You tinselled boy!' ejaculated the old gentleman, in vexation, as he eyed his son from top to toe; 'you are a mighty beau, egad, you are, though of the tawdry sort.'

'Mr. Threadneedle, sir, is accounted one of the first tailors in Oxford,' replied Master Dick, in a somewhat bolder tone than he had yet spoken; 'he hath always borne a high name for the quality of the goods he supplies, and the superiority of the work sent out from his shop.'

'Your most obedient humble servant, Dick; but where hast gotten such an excellent knowledge of the trade gibberish?' exclaimed the evidently incensed father, with a satirical laugh. 'I sent you to Oxford, and have kept you here these two years past, at a sore trouble to myself, straitened as are my means, thinking that you had good parts, and that you would follow some one of the learned professions and make a name for yourself in the world. But i' faith,' he added bitterly, 'I had better have bound ye apprentice to a tailor.'

Poor lad,' continued the old gentleman, ironically, 'you'll never die for a plot—at least, of your own making.'

Dick sat swelling with indignation, but made no reply ; for though he yearned to get over his terrible disclosure at once, he yet could not find sufficient courage to reveal the secret of his attachment to Thread-needle's daughter.

'And so he bears a high name, does he, this paragon of tailors?' said the senior gentleman, in a sneering tone. 'One thing I can testify to, Dick, egad! I can : his bills are high, whatever his name is, and all for making you look like a Jack-Pudding, you tinselled whelp ! But where does the man live ?'

This was certainly a supererogatory question on the part of Dick's sire, as we have seen him already critically viewing the worthy tradesman's residence ; but the young student already guessed that his father was tired of beating about the bush, and that the real tug of war was now coming ; so he was little, if at all, surprised

when his brief reply, that the tailor lived in High Street, was met by the further question.

‘Pr’ythee, Dick, hath this Knight of the Thimble a daughter?’

‘Yes, sir,’ replied Dick, trying to look unconcerned, though he felt the blood rising up to his temples.

‘Ah, egad! I suspected as much,’ answered the father, with a derisive chuckle. ‘An artful baggage, a clever jade, I’ll warrant, who allures young students by her charms and blandishments, and introduces them to the tailor, by whom they or their luckless fathers get smartly fleeced. And you, poor lad, poor raw greenhead! you have been one of the victims. She has been the spider who has lured you into the web, and you are the silly fly.’

Galling enough it was to Dick to be compared to the fly, but to hear his adored Miss Nan likened to a spider was more than his lover’s heart could endure; so he cried out, in tones in which anger, excitement, and apprehension all mingled:

‘Pray, sir, speak not in those terms of Miss Threadneedle.’

‘Marry, Master Dick, and why not?’

‘Because, sir, because I love her,’ burst out Dick, in an impetuous tone, the drops of perspiration standing on his forehead while he made the announcement. When he had made it, he felt emboldened, and confronted his father without flinching.

The latter threw himself back in his chair and laughed, but it was a horribly discordant laugh; Dick would sooner have heard a storm of angry words.

‘I love her!’ mimicked the irate sire, when he could command his voice. ‘And, pray, how old is this fair syren, this charming creature, who hath taken thy heart by storm? thou poor, silly, crack-brained greenhead! Is she a miss in her teens? or rather, some spinster of double thy age? ’Tis usually such that boys like you, you young whelp, bestow their calf’s love on. First love, first folly!’ muttered the old gentleman between his teeth.

‘I trust I may not forget the reverence

that is due to you, sir,' replied Dick, his voice trembling with resentment, 'but I have to put the greatest restraint upon myself when I hear you speak thus of a young lady whom you do not know, and have never even seen.'

'Lady! whew!' whistled the provoked father, with a wide stare. 'You silly green-head! My service to you both. Why, she's neither one thing nor another, neither gentlewoman nor linsey-woolsey.'

'The charms of her person,' interposed Dick passionately (taking no notice of his father's contemptuous remark), 'are equalled only by those of her mind. She is everything that is polite and gentle, and her wit and intelligence are matchless—and in short, sir, I love her to distraction, and shall do so till the last moment of my life. I could not exist without her. She has deigned also to assure me of her affection for myself, and I should not have let many more weeks elapse without confiding the attachment I had formed to you; but you have anticipated me, sir, in a most unkind fashion.'

During the delivery of this rhapsody, the father looked at his son with a comical expression of countenance, and a smile was almost perceptible at the corners of his mouth, though, in truth, he was nearly boiling over with anger.

‘Of course, Dick, the tailor knows the secret of your love for his charming daughter?’

The old gentleman’s tone softened, and he spoke very blandly, and poor love-sick Dick did not notice the malicious twinkle in his eye, and thought, perhaps, he was beginning to relent.

‘Why, yes, sir, Mr. Threadneedle hath known of our mutual love for some time past, and he laid no prohibition on Miss Nan whatsoever.’

‘Kind, most kind and disinterested; this tailor is a man of lofty soul!’ said Dick’s sire.

‘He has ever been a kind and indulgent parent, and would never try to thwart her affections,’ continued Master Dick, laying an emphasis on the words, and looking

reproachfully at his parent, as though he would say, 'Do you take example by him, sir'—'and this is the more remarkable, because he purposes giving to her a very large fortune.'

'Indeed, and what, may I ask, is the amount of this fortune, Dick ?'

'£40,000, sir,' replied Dick, in slow and solemn accents.

'Forty thousand pounds !' replied the father, in equally solemn tones. 'My stars ! and you believe that ?'

'Most certainly, sir, I do. But, in truth, she is so charming a young creature, and so fascinating, and I love her so dearly, that I have never thought about her money.'

'No ! I dare say not. I wonder, though, if she contemplates the chance of your having any, Dick ?' said his father, drily.

Dick felt an unpleasant qualm, for he could not forget sundry little inquiries on the part of the fair Nan, which had shown a solicitude on her part to become better acquainted with his financial prospects. He therefore looked confused and did not

answer, whilst a nervous twitch played about his mouth.

‘Don’t stand there grinning and laughing like an oaf!’ said his incensed father, rising abruptly from his seat. ‘You have disgraced yourself, sir, you have disgraced your family, by sneaking after a low, pitiful, breeches-maker’s daughter. But I will tell you something: when the Knight of the Thimble comes to hear from my lips, as he shall to-morrow, that I have not a penny to bestow upon you, he will bid his pert baggage give you your dismissal—and she’ll do it readily enough, I’ll be sworn. And I’ll tell you something more, too—I see that a University is no place for you, so you may now bid good-bye to Oxford and your charming and adorable Nan.’

‘Whatever happens, she will be true to me, even unto death!’ replied Dick enthusiastically.

And hugging himself with that fond persuasion, Dick sat by the open window long after his angry sire had left him, drawing parallels between the stars and the eyes

of the adorable Miss Nan, and weaving bright spells for the future, though none foreshadowed to him the immortality that should attach itself to the name of Richard Nash.

CHAPTER IV.

BE JUST BEFORE YOU ARE GENEROUS.

LONDON BRIDGE, with all its bustle and traffic, is by no means a pleasant thoroughfare to traverse, even in these days ; but to cross it, when it formed the only passage over the Thames, as was the case at the end of the seventeenth century and for long afterwards, was something worse than unpleasant. The bridge was then very narrow, being straitened by houses and shops erected on either side of it. And when it was crowded with waggons and vehicles of all sorts, as it generally was, it was often at peril to life and limb that the pedestrian ventured to cross it, to say nothing of the certainty of his garments being mud-bespat-

tered in bad weather and coated with dust on fine dry days.

Traversing London Bridge on a sultry day in August, the 30th of the month, Mr. Richard Nash, whilom student of Jesus College, now an officer in the army, or rather his clothes—and he was very gaily attired—came in for a plentiful share of the clouds of dust raised by the many passing vehicles, amidst which pedestrians had to thread their way as best they might. Nash had to use much caution and circumspection, and to look warily about him, whilst making this formidable passage of the bridge. He was dressed in his regimentals, but the fact of an officer walking about in uniform did not attract notice or cause him to appear singular at a time, when civilians also wore laced coats of bright colours. However, in such gay attire as he was then decked, a sedan chair would have been a pleasant and more suitable mode of travelling ; but then, sedan chairs were not to be hired for nothing, and Richard Nash had often very little in his purse.

His father was still as much straitened in his means as when, two years since, he had groaned over Dick's long tailor's bill. As the senior Mr. Nash had predicted, Miss Nan Threadneedle was quite content to resign her youthful suitor when she found how totally dependent he was upon his father, and that that gentleman's principal income arose from a partnership in a glass-house at Swansea, and not from a large landed estate there, as she and her fond, calculating parents had supposed.

Poor Dick was so crestfallen by this mercenary conduct on the part of his adored mistress, that he was quite content to leave Oxford, and to blot out from his memory, as far as possible, this, his first romance.

At the young gentleman's earnest request, his father bought him a pair of colours in a marching regiment, and by the time he had attained twenty-one the indulgent parent, at no little inconvenience, purchased for him his promotion ; so it was that Richard Nash thus made his first start in life, still

pursued, however, by his indomitable love of fine clothes and high and fashionable society. Indeed, Dick's greatest happiness was in being in company with people of quality—rather unsuitable inclinations, it must be owned, for a young man whose purse was at all times but scantily filled.

However, rich apparel Master Richard would have, and rich apparel he did have, spite of his poverty, though many a brother in trade of Mr. Threadneedle was left to chafe over unpaid bills and the cool audacity with which Master Dick put off his creditors.

On this hot August morning Nash was on his way to pay his daily visit to his aunt in Great Queen Street. He was in London on leave of absence, and for cheapness took lodgings in Southwark ; but he found Mrs. Herbert's house a delightful resort, for the good dinners he enjoyed there were not to be despised by a poor young captain, who often had to put up with scant fare when cast wholly on his own resources. Besides, not unfrequently

a few guineas would find their way from his aunt's purse into his, and these gold pieces were always highly acceptable, though some alloy mingled with the satisfaction with which he received them, in the shape of strictures from the kind donor on his extravagance and love of finery.

The dust on London Bridge was very objectionable that broiling August day; it filled the scented curls of Dick's huge periwig, the broad brim of his hat, turned up on either side, or cocked, to use the proper term, and the bows of ribbon placed around it, and his gold-laced scarlet coat was as white as though he had been in a flour-mill. No wonder that so fastidious a young fop should look indignant and wrathful. The passage of the bridge was as trying to his temper as to his garments. It could not have been a pleasant sensation to feel a poke from the pole of a sedan chair in the small of the back, even though the bearers did sing out, in broad Hibernian brogue, 'By your leave, sir,' or to find a horse's nose intruded amongst the curls of his periwig.

On reaching the middle of the bridge, the further progress of Mr. Dick Nash was stayed altogether for awhile, for amidst a great confusion of voices, loud shouting, and much bustle and uproar caused by the stoppage of the traffic, the drawbridge was being raised to allow a vessel with tall masts to pass. Here the river became visible on either side, crowded with craft of all sizes, and its banks lined with wharves and warehouses. The heaving up of the drawbridge, and then lowering it again, being a rather long process, Richard Nash stood apart from the crowd, apparently gazing at the prospect which this opened to view, or the ship passing by, or the men employed at the bridge, but in reality trying to attract the admiration of by-standers by his foppish gestures and practices. One minute he would take out his gold snuff-box, tap it, and take a pinch of snuff, with an elegant flourish of his hand ; the next moment he would draw out from his pocket a curiously-chased and ornamented ivory comb, an article as indispensable to

the beaux of those days as the snuff-box, and deliberately comb his huge peruke. It was, indeed the fashion for the gallants then to comb their periwigs in public in the Mall, in the boxes of the theatre, and even when talking and flirting with ladies.

After the drawbridge had been let down again, and our hero had threaded his way through the dangers of the narrow thoroughfare, a region equally fraught with peril to the dainty garments of a fop yet lay betwixt him and his aunt's house in Great Queen Street.

The difficulties and obstacles attending his progress along Leadenhall Street, Cornhill, and Fleet Street were manifold : but the dangers were below, at his feet, not overhead, for there was no wind to cause, as it sometimes did, the huge heavy signboards, suspended outside every shop and projecting far into the street, to swing ominously to and fro, threatening mortal peril to the heads of passengers. But if the absence of any breeze had this advantage, a hot close day, without a

breath of air stirring, such as was this 30th of August, had its own peculiar disadvantages and annoyances ; for some wind, however gentle and slight, might have borne away the very unsavoury odours issuing from the channels that ran down the middle of the streets, and into which servants were in the habit of casting offal, rubbish, and all sorts of offensive matter, that inflicted vile smells on the olfactory nerves of the passers-by.

• Through these filthy, savoury-smelling streets might be seen our ‘beau,’ Richard Nash, picking his way cautiously and carefully over the rough, broken, and irregular pavement, holding his perfumed handkerchief to his nose with one hand, and propping himself with his cane with the other, lest he should slip into some dirty puddle.

At one spot in Cornhill the open channel in its middle was completely choked up by the quantity of rubbish thrown into it, and its waters, instead of running away, had overflowed and formed a vast pool, so that much circumspection on the part of our

beau was necessary to enable him to pilot his way and keep clear of the slime and mud. This feat he could only accomplish by walking close under the shop windows, if indeed windows they could be called, for they were open and unglazed, like the windows of butchers and greengrocers of our times. Nor was it always possible to keep close to the shops, for frequently not only did the shop windows project into the narrow and irregular streets, but barrels and huge packages stood against the doors and vaults, and open cellar doors lay yawning for the unwary passenger.

Thus it happened that Dick, passing down Ludgate Hill, intent only on avoiding danger to his gay clothes from the trampling and splashing of horses, waggons, and carriages in the deep and dirty channels, did not notice a couple of 'prentice lads washing out a great butt before a shop, and so received an unpleasant sprinkling of water, not of pristine purity.

There we shall, for the present, leave him, bestowing some hard words on the delin-

quents, and some yet harder blows with his cane, and then setting forth once more on his way, to brave further perils in Fleet Street, and anticipate his arrival at his aunt's house, where, we may observe, he and all his failings and his conduct generally were at that very time under discussion.

Mrs. Herbert was in the room where we first saw her, seated near the window, but not watching old Peter's proceedings in the garden this time, for she was engaged in earnest conversation with Margaret, and her looks showed signs of inward trouble and agitation.

'I have never known Richard come so late, child, and my heart misgives me, lest he should have had ill news of my dear Ned.'

'Nay, madam,' replied Margaret, 'surely Edward would have let you know himself if any danger had befallen him, and not have sent to his cousin; how could he aid him? I think, dear madam, you are tormenting yourself needlessly; Edward was

to have left Lord Molineux's house on the 15th July, and my lord was not arrested till the 17th.*

'Ay, child, you do well to try and comfort me, but remember that Richard Hayward is one of the sharpest of all Hogan Mogan's messengers, and he and two vile informers searched the house, and broke open all the cabinets and boxes; they may have found, amongst the papers, some writing that would criminate my poor boy.'

Margaret shook her head, and again tried to comfort her kind and loving friend, but did not succeed, for the fears of the latter were not quite without foundation. Her fiery and impetuous young son was in heart a devoted Jacobite, and had narrowly escaped being implicated in Col. Parker's plot in a previous year. Edward Herbert was a great favourite with Lord Molineux, and had gone to spend some weeks with him at his estate in Lancashire, so that when news reached London that that

*The Jacobite Trials in 1694, the Cheetham Society's Publications, vol. xxviii. page 44, etc.

nobleman, who was suspected of plotting against the Government, had been arrested under the Duke of Shrewsbury's warrant, Mrs. Herbert's maternal heart was full of fear, lest her son should have been still at his friend's house when Captain Baker and the Dutch troopers had poured into it.

'I could hardly have thought it possible,' said the elder lady, very bitterly, 'that the English, who pretend to be so jealous of their liberties, could submit to let foreigners invade their houses, and ride rough-shod over the land as they now do. They say that that ruffian, Captain Baker, put a guard of Dutch troopers, along with their wives and horses, in my lord's house, at free quarters for three weeks.'

'But, dear madam, Edward would not be there then, I am sure. You know he was to be at Squire Conway's in Herefordshire, and from thence he was to go to Swansea. He must be quite safe; bad news always travels quickly, and if it had been otherwise we should have heard of him.'

‘You only say you think nothing is wrong, Margaret, to comfort me. Why should not Edward have written, if he had gone to Swansea? but you know he had not quite made up his mind whether he would go to see his uncle.’

‘He may have written, my dear madam. Letters are often a long time on the way, and sometimes they miscarry altogether; and then again, if Edward knew he should soon see you, where would be the use of his writing? You know that he does not love writing too well.’

‘Then what can keep Richard?’ asked Mrs. Herbert, tapping her foot impatiently on the floor. ‘Just because I want to talk with him about Edward, he chooses to be late. Some morning, child,’ (she added abruptly) ‘we shall hear of his being arrested.’

‘La, dearest madam, that is most unlikely,’ replied Margaret, in some surprise; ‘I believe Mr. Richard hath no very great aversion to the reigning king.’

‘You mistake me, Margaret, I meant for

debt. That misguided boy will get into gaol sooner or later, if he perseveres in his present courses. His extravagance is frightful. He is as fine as my Lord Cockatoo with his huge periwig. Did you see that rich cravat of Brussels lace he wore yesterday? I believe he hath a new neckcloth for every day in the week. And so plain featured as he is too! Such fine dress doth but make his ill looks more apparent. I should tell him so plainly, were it not a sin against politeness.'

Margaret smiled, for, in truth, good Mrs. Herbert had often told her nephew so very plainly, indeed, when, as was her habit, she was unconsciously expressing her thoughts aloud.

'A gentleman in the army must dress well,' observed Margaret mildly, and in an exculpatory tone; 'and then Richard is so kind-hearted and so generous. I never knew anyone more truly beneficent. I believe he would strip himself of his last shilling to aid anyone in want.'

'All very well, my dear,' answered Mrs.

Herbert, in an inflexible tone, 'if Richard had the means to follow the dictates of his very compassionate heart ; but he is charitable at the expense of others—of his father and his creditors. Stripping himself of his last shilling, means stripping his father of that sum. Charity begins at home, and we should be just before we are generous. Richard would give a guinea to a beggar in the streets, who might be an impostor, and leave his shoemaker or his landlady unpaid, honest folk, probably, with, perhaps, a tribe of little hungry wretches crying about them for bread.'

'Nay, dear madam, I protest, Mr. Richard is too good a creature to deprive worthy people of their dues,' said Margaret, charitably anxious to defend the absent.

Mrs. Herbert was silent for a few moments, then, falling into her old inveterate habit of speaking her thoughts aloud, she said, in a quick under-tone :

'Hey day, good lack, the poor girl stands up for him stoutly ; I hope she is not in love with the jackanapes. Poor girl, poor

girl! I believe he hath no more than friendship for her.'

Margaret could afford to smile in this instance at the remark of her benefactress, for she was certainly not the least enamoured of Dick Nash, and so she felt herself quite at ease in persisting in his defence.

'I think, dear madam, you misunderstand him; he is certainly rather extravagant, but he does not willingly leave his debts unpaid: and really, were he ever so thrifty, I think he would scarce manage to make ends meet; it is but a very small addition to his pay that his father allows him. I know he hath been in the greatest distress about a little debt of ten guineas.

'And for what doth he owe this debt of ten guineas? For finery of some sort, I'll warrant.'

'No, indeed, I protest, dearest madam; it is for quite another matter. Mr. Richard was so short of money when he was quartered at Canterbury, that he had to borrow ten guineas to settle his bill at the inn where he was billeted, and to pay

young Peter his wages—old Peter's son, you know, who is in his regiment, and is his servant—and so you see, dear madam, Richard borrowed from a brother officer who is not very well off. It was only the other day that he told me of his trouble.'

'And who is the officer who lent him the money?' asked Mrs. Herbert.

Margaret hesitated a little, for she knew her aunt's dislike to the Dutch, and then said timidly :

'His name is Van Bots, a Captain Van Bots, a Dutch gentleman.'

'Good lack! child,' exclaimed Mrs. Herbert, with quite unusual vehemence. 'You should have told me this before. I feel mightily provoked! I feel vastly distressed and ashamed! I vow and protest I do.'

'Distressed and ashamed! dearest madam, for why?' asked Margaret, opening her large grey eyes to their widest; for though she expected her friend to be provoked at hearing the name of the Dutch officer, she was quite unprepared to see so apparent distress.

‘How can you ask, Margaret? To think that my nephew, the grand-nephew of that loyal-hearted English soldier, Colonel Povey, should be indebted to the charity of one of Hogan Mogan’s Dutch boors! I vow and protest that I shall not rest till Richard has paid the debt. I will give him the money this very day, that he may at once send it to this man Boots—some pitiful fellow, I vow; one of the Dutch vampires, I make no doubt, come to prey upon the vitals of our poor country.’

Margaret could not help being amused at Mrs. Herbert’s indignation against the unoffending Captain Van Bots, and she mildly observed that so far as she had heard, the Dutch captain was but slightly known to King William, and had come to England on his own account.

‘To fatten and grow insolent, like all these vile foreigners,’ replied Mrs. Herbert, wrathfully, ‘and ride roughshod over us all. The Court is filled with them, and the army and every place of honour and profit are full of them. I know them—a grasping

needy crew! I'll give Richard the money to pay his debt, but let him take care he never brings his friend Boots here.'

'Why, who is Boots?' asked a gay voice at the door, which caused Mrs. Herbert to start from her chair with a joyous exclamation of surprise. It was the truant son, safe and sound, and but just arrived from Swansea. He had left Lord Molineux's house on the 15th of July, thus escaping Captain Baker and his company of Dutch troopers.

Some sorrow there was, mingled with joy at Ned's safe return, when the conversation turned upon Lord Molineux. The poor nobleman had been too ill when first arrested by Captain Baker, early in the morning, to leave his bed, and had been kept a prisoner for some days in his own house, and thence, though still unwell, removed to Chester, and there kept under a strict guard, until he was sent up, along with other prisoners, to London. After a tedious journey, during which he was not over well treated, he happened to arrive in London on this very 30th of August.

Mrs. Herbert's fears for her son's safety being now set at rest by his arrival at home, and she having duly scolded him for his remissness in not writing, he, after dutifully excusing himself on the score of his bad penmanship, again reiterated the question he had asked on first entering the room.

'Tis a Dutchman that your cousin Richard hath borrowed money of. Fie upon him thus to disgrace himself, a man with the blood of the Poveys in his veins to borrow of a Dutchman !'

Ned smiled at this allusion to the Poveys ; he had them, to use his own words, flung in his face when he had committed any delinquency, and, Jacobite though he was, he had sometimes expressed a wish, in confidence, to his cousin, that she would let the distinguished Colonel Povey rest quietly in his grave.

'Poor Dick, he is always in debt. 'Tis a thousand pities he is not a rich man, for he is so generous that many would benefit by his wealth.'

'He would dispense it without dis-

crimination,' said Mrs. Herbert. 'As for this debt to that Dutchman, I shall give him the means to settle it. I wonder he is not here yet: he dines with us nearly every day.'

'He will be here presently,' replied Edward, laughing, 'I caught sight of him in Fleet Street, picking his way along, with great care, out of a tender regard for his new shoes and stupendous silver buckles and his fine light-coloured stockings. I should have crossed the road to him, but he stayed to speak to Lord——, and I thought I would not interrupt him, for you know Dick loves to speak with a lord.'

At this moment, Dick himself made his appearance, and his aunt received him very graciously, for her son's safe return had made her not only happy herself, but wishful to make others happy also. Accordingly, when Edward Herbert had quitted the chamber to change his travelling dress, and Margaret retired to her own room for a few minutes to control the glad emotions of joy at Edward's safety, which she feared to indulge in too openly, lest she should in any way

betray her secret, Mrs. Herbert took the opportunity to give Dick the ten guineas. But she accompanied the gift with a few words of advice to her nephew upon the danger of his contracting any intimacy with the Dutch captain, whom she insisted on calling Boots, and whom she evidently was determined to look upon as a totally unprincipled character. As Master Nash saw that any attempt on his part to represent Captain Van Bots in a more favourable light would only draw down his aunt's displeasure upon himself, he wisely forbore.

After dinner and the dessert were over, and the healths of absent friends had been toasted in Tokay and Frontiniac, the ladies, accompanied by Edward, went to pay some visits, where they expected to see a great deal of what was called good company, from whence they proceeded to Covent Garden, to loiter in the great auction house there, and gossip with more company; and while they were thus engaged, Richard Nash, being attired in new and elegant costume, and the afternoon being beautiful,

determined, before going back to his lodging in the unfashionable region of South wark, to perform the part of a 'pretty fellow,' as the ladies styled the beaux of that period, in the Park. So he hired a sedan chair, feeling that he was entitled so to do, seeing that he had ten guineas in his pocket.

On arriving at the Green Park he dismissed his chairmen, and commenced making the tour of that fashionable place of resort. Here, amongst all the gentlemen, distinguished by their careless air and dress and their quaintly cocked hats, few were more eminently remarkable than our hero. To one lady he would gallantly offer his snuff-box, asking if she took snuff; to another he would observe that the afternoon was very fine, and that there was a good deal of polite company in the Park, and that the town was very full; and, in short, he practised all the airs and antics of a coxcomb, and gained for himself from the ladies the character of a beau and the most diverting man in the world.

Being at last tired of the Green Park and the company, Nash made his way to the less frequented Hyde Park, it might be to meditate without interruption, or it might be to enjoy the charms of more rural scenery. After sauntering about for some time, he strolled to the edge of a clear stream, that flowed through the Park from Bayswater and fell into the Thames at Ranelagh, no longer a little winding limpid stream, but now the well-known Serpentine.

He was walking slowly up and down, watching in a very pleasant frame of mind the rippling of the tiny wavelets against the grassy bank, and thinking of a certain fair mistress, for he was very gallant in these days, and Nan Threadneedle had had several successors, when, like a whirlwind, a young man suddenly rushed upon him from a thicket, and in a fierce tone ordered him to stand and deliver.

A pleasant invitation, truly, for a man who knew he had ten guineas in his purse, wherewith to pay a pressing debt.

CHAPTER V.

FOR MAKING ONE MAN HAPPY, TEN GUINEAS.

FOR a few moments the two men stood and eyed each other, Nash calm and undaunted, spite of the pistol levelled at his breast (for he was possessed of great natural courage); his assailant fierce and menacing: when suddenly a change came over the latter; his eye lost its baleful glare, his features relaxed, and, flinging the pistol violently from him into the rippling waters of the stream, he uttered an agonised exclamation, and burst into tears; then, before Nash could speak, he cried out:

‘I wanted, sir, to rob you, but found I

could not ; heaven has preserved me from such a crime, and I implore your forgiveness for my attack upon you.'

'Sir,' replied Nash, in tones of the deepest emotion, extending both his hands as he spoke, and grasping warmly those of the stranger, 'I most heartily forgive you, and I am filled with sincere concern and sorrow at seeing a man, whom I perceive well to be a gentleman, both by his manner and speech, reduced to such a lamentable plight, and I feel persuaded you must be the innocent victim of great misfortunes.'

'Alas ! yes,' answered the stranger, heaving a deep sigh, 'one great misfortune has pursued me from my birth—poverty.'

Yes, truly, the gentleman bore poverty and want stamped upon him, and the eyes of kind, tender-hearted Richard Nash were suffused with tears as he gazed at the hollow cheeks, the haggard face, and the poor threadbare garments hanging loose upon the attenuated form. His heart swelled with sympathy, and, with his usual eager impulsive benevolence, he hastily

pulled his purse from his pocket, took out the ten guineas his aunt had given him, and thrusting them into the hand of the astounded stranger, exclaimed :

‘ There, sir, ’tis all I have just now, but, an it make one man happy, ’twill be ten guineas well bestowed.’

The stranger tried to speak, but for a few moments a variety of emotions seemed to deprive him of the power of utterance. At length he said :

‘ I cannot, indeed I cannot, suffer you to give such a sum to a stranger, and to one who would have robbed you ; half of it will give me new life, and will save me from destruction. I wish I could thank you, but words could not express the gratitude that overpowers me. Heaven surely will bless your good deed, for in relieving me you relieve also my poor aged mother, my wife, and my two little innocent children, who are on the verge of starvation. I am their sole support, and, alas ! for weeks past I have earned nothing.’

As he spoke, the stranger would have pressed five out of the ten guineas into his benefactor's hand, but the latter resolutely refused them, saying :

‘Nay, sir, I will not take back a gift ; besides, those five guineas will be of more use to you than to me. Meanwhile, if not an impertinence, I should like to know your name, and to hear somewhat of your history ; perhaps, though not rich myself, I might aid you through my friends.’

‘Sir, you follow up one act of kindness by another,’ replied the stranger, wringing our hero's hand in his own. ‘My name is Joseph Callender, and by what name, sir, may I tell my poor little wretches at home to call their benefactor, when they address their innocent prayers to heaven for him.’

‘You think too much of the little aid I have been enabled to afford you ; pray, dear sir, do not name it again ; my name is Richard Nash. I am at present lodging in Southwark, and if you will accompany me and sup with me, I shall consider the little obligation I have conferred on

you cancelled by the favour of your company.'

'I shall be only too glad,' replied Callender; 'and as I live myself in that quarter, I can take your generous donation to the poor women and little ones at home.'

The two new friends now set off together for Southwark, Nash having agreed to walk, for he was a good pedestrian, and the evening was lovely.

'As we go along, I will give you a brief outline of my life,' said Callender. It has not been an eventful one, but what it fails to possess in incident it has made up for in disappointment and sorrow. My father was a poor clergyman, and served a curacy in a remote part of Cornwall, for which the incumbent paid him £20 a year. Ah, Mr. Nash, if the clergy do so hardly by one another, they should not be surprised if the laity treat them as they do. I was the youngest of a very large family.'

'How strange! 'Tis mighty odd! Poor clergymen always have large families,' said Nash, in a tone of commiseration.

Callender took no heed of the interruption, but went on rather more eagerly.

‘You can have no idea what a life of privation ours was, Mr. Nash. To gain £10 more a year, my poor father agreed to read prayers in the afternoon at another church, about four miles off, but he could hardly find us the necessaries of life: our stomachs were pinched, and our bodies half clothed. The squire’s lady helped us a little, sometimes, and now and then, my father was asked up to the Hall to dinner, but only as a corner dish.’

‘Bless me! how very extraordinary,’ exclaimed Nash, who did not happen to know much of the clergy, or the manner in which they were generally treated by the gentry, and consequently failed to understand Callender’s last words.

‘I see you are puzzled,’ said the poor clergyman’s son, with a bitter smile. ‘When the squire, at the last moment, finds there will be a vacant place at his dinner-table, through the non-arrival of some expected guest, he invites, or I should rather say,

commands, the parson of the parish to come and fill up the vacancy there and then, and he facetiously styles him a corner dish, and graciously permits him to take his fill of corned beef and carrots ; but he must beware how he ventures to touch any of the dainty dishes reserved for more honoured guests.'

'A most unchristian and ungenteel way of behaving,' remarked Nash.

'My father was just able to send me to our Market Latin-Grammar School ; my other brothers had to whistle behind the plough ; and when I grew up, our squire, who seemed to have some fancy for me, gave my father the wherewithal to send me as a servitor to Oxford.'

'I also was at Oxford,' exclaimed Nash, 'at Jesus' College.'

'I think the happiest time in my life was spent there,' said Callender. 'I was intended for the Church, and I studied very hard. The squire had promised to procure me a small living, and I returned to Cornwall, when my University course was at an

end, full of hope and happy expectation. Well, happiness awaited me in one sense, but extreme misery in another. The squire's lady had for her maid a sweet young girl, the orphan daughter of a clergyman, who had been as poor as my own father.'

'Dear me,' interrupted Nash, 'I see what follows: you fell in love with her, and offended your patron's lady by carrying off her favourite abigail.'

'I did so,' exclaimed Callender, with heightened colour and flashing eyes, 'and I married her, but by doing so I raised a hornets' nest about my ears, and in a worldly point of view I sealed my own ruin.'

'Exactly,' said Nash, 'love is irresistible. But, an you had only waited a few years, just until you had got the living the squire promised, it would have been better; besides, time often smooths away obstacles.'

Nash, having overcome his passion for Nan Threadneedle, felt himself able to

moralise, but his companion did not altogether appreciate the sage reflections.

‘Nay, my dear sir, as well try to stem the course of a raging torrent as to bid two devoted lovers wait.’

Callender had begun to talk very loud and wave his arms about in his excitement, and as he and Nash had quitted Hyde Park, and Piccadilly was somewhat thronged, the latter began to wish most devoutly that he had taken a chair, for all eyes were drawn upon them through his companion’s gesticulations. Our hero was also haunted by the apprehension of some one or another of his gay companions crossing his path, and finding him in such apparently questionable company.

‘Well, my dear sir, I did not wait,’ resumed Callender; ‘I married, incurred thereby the deadly resentment of the squire’s lady, quitted my native place in consequence, and, having lost all hope of Church preferment, turned author.’

Callender pronounced these last words in so shrill a tone, and followed them by such

a bitter and hideous laugh, that Nash felt an involuntary terror lest his new found friend should prove to be an escaped lunatic.

‘I see, my dear sir,’ said Callender, abruptly, ‘by your looks, that you half suspect me to be mad.’

This guess was so near the truth, that Nash was taken rather aback, and did not attempt to make any reply.

‘But I am not mad,’ continued Callender, in a somewhat calmer tone, ‘though, in truth, my calamities have been such as often well nigh to reduce me to that pass.’

‘I fear, my dear sir,’ said Nash, ‘to judge by your words, that your success as an author has not been great.’

‘And you judge rightly, sir; I often marvel at myself, when I return home at night, foot-sore and hungry, after visiting perhaps all the publishers in London in vain, with my rejected roll of MS. under my arm, how I can still hope, still persevere; but it is the knowledge of my own powers, sir, of my own talents—powers and talents,

sir—which would raise me from this slough of despond, did not my cruel enemies keep me down. Of late, my dear sir, I have been trying what success I can have in a fresh field. I have written for the stage.’

‘Well,’ said Nash, cheerfully, ‘the theatres are thronged now. Drury Lane and Covent Garden are filled every night, so I trust that as a dramatic author you may yet achieve success.’

‘No, no,’ replied his companion, shaking his head with a gloomy air, ‘’tis all the same: I am a poor author, with no friend at my back, in the person of a great man, to recommend me, and not being versed in the arts of servility and adulation, I find the managers as difficult to deal with as the publishers. I have written, my dear sir, a play in five acts, which I feel convinced would draw crowded houses were it only suffered to appear. I will bring it you to-morrow, with your kind permission, that you may read it and give me your opinion.’

Nash groaned in spirit at this intimation, but he could only, in politeness, assure his

new friend that he should have much pleasure in perusing it.

‘No one knows my name as a writer. Tell me, my dear sir, did you ever know the name of Callender in connection with literature?’

Nash was obliged to confess that he had not; whereupon Callender, who was becoming excited again, under the consideration of the wrongs and slights he had suffered, hemmed him for a moment into a corner, that he might speak more freely.

‘No one knows Joseph Callender, but who has not heard of Jacob Jenkins?’ vociferated the poor author, whilst the bearers of an empty sedan chair, to Nash’s intense annoyance, set it down close to him, that they, too, might hear about Jenkins. ‘He is my friend, sir, and a good man, on the whole, is Jenkins,’ continued the author. ‘I say nothing against his moral character, though he hath printed twelfth edition on the title-pages of some of his productions which I know have not gone through more than one; but as a dramatic writer, I

assure you, he is beneath criticism, he is below contempt, his pieces are vile, insipid farragoes of dulness and folly, but they are powerfully recommended; there lies all the secret, and, in addition to this, he has the newspaper critics at his back.'

'Don't you think we had better walk on, my dear sir?' suggested Nash, whom Callender now suffered to emerge from his corner: 'you are going to call at your own house, you know, on the way, and you promised to sup with me. I sup early.'

'Yes, we will go on,' replied Callender, setting out with rapid strides, so that Nash had a difficulty in keeping up with him. For a few moments the poor author remained silent, and our hero was in hopes that his thoughts were running in more pleasant channels, for he smiled, but the smile proved to be one of derision:

'These newspaper critics never tell the truth. It is astonishing what fulsome puffs they will write for a dinner, and how they will abuse a talented young author who hath not the wherewithal to bribe them.'

Here Callender, who had spoken hurriedly and in a very angry tone, paused from sheer want of breath, and wiped the perspiration from his face with the remnant of a dirty pocket-handkerchief. Nash said nothing ; indeed, he knew not what to say, but he assumed a grave look, though he felt somewhat amused, for he saw clearly that his new friend was an unsuccessful and a disappointed and provoked author, and consequently unduly hard upon the newspaper critics.

By this time the two gentlemen reached Pall Mall, when Nash, chancing to look over to the opposite side of the road, saw, to his no small distress and consternation, two of his fashionable friends gazing at him with looks of mingled surprise and amusement, and as Callender just at that moment caught hold of him by the button-hole, the better to arrest his attention, Nash could not help being struck by the unpleasant reflection that his two friends surmised him to be in the hands of a bailiff.

Nash would have crossed over to them,

but they at that moment entered a hackney coach and drove off, laughing. For a second he felt almost vexed with the poor author, but his native tenderness of heart repressed this feeling almost as soon as it arose, and he listened patiently to Callender's further revelations :

'Authors, such as Jenkins, who are hand in glove with the newspaper critics, my dear sir, may write their own reviews. A novel plan that, is it not, to criticise your own productions ? Pleasant, too ! and you may guess what sort of review it would be.'

Here Nash smiled incredulously, and ejaculated, 'Come, come, Mr. Callender !'

'You may smile, Mr. Nash, but what I tell you is true. Everything is done now by puffing. Why, sir, many of these authors form a regular clique, and they laud up each other to the skies in the newspapers, and write epigrams and reviews and flattering criticisms on each other's works.'

'I wish, with all my heart,' replied Nash,

with a sigh, 'that you may find some more remunerative profession than that of authorship.'

'Ay, 'tis a scurvy profession, an' you depend on it for a livelihood,' replied Callender; 'but still, when one feels the capacity within one to write, 'tis not easy to remove it.'

Apparently dismissing the critics from his mind, Callender now began to talk with the enthusiasm and egotism of a young author of the offsprings of his brain, his prose works and his plays, and Nash listened and marvelled at his enthusiasm, for not till many and many a year has rolled by, not till his locks are silvered with age, shall Richard Nash indulge in the bright dreams and lofty aspirations of young authorship.

CHAPTER VI.

SOME MISTAKE.

‘I CAN never understand Edward’s motive in so obstinately keeping up an intimacy with that vulgar young man Robert Vezey.’

So said Mrs. Herbert, in a tone of some indignation, after the departure of the servant who had brought to her the intimation that Mr. Vezey had called, and was in the parlour.

She was seated in a little rustic arbour in her garden, at the termination of a gravel walk bordered on either side by flower beds, where the brilliant hues of carnations and Flanders geraniums contrasted with the sombre hues of a dark

background of yews cut into fantastic shapes. The morning was oppressively hot, so that the arbour, erected under the shadow of a leafy walnut tree, afforded a cool and pleasant retreat, whilst Mrs. Herbert could divide her attention between the blue velvet table-cover which she was embroidering with the coat of arms of the Poveys in silver, and old Peter's manipulations amongst the flowers.

Margaret, who had been reading aloud, but whose task was suspended in consequence of the arrival of the visitor, said, as she placed the volume on the rustic seat beside her :

'Tis not Edward's fault, dear madam, that he keeps up such an acquaintance. I know he hath but little liking for Mr. Vezey ; but the young man fails to see it, and seems so fond of Edward, that without being positively rude, I don't see what he can do.'

'Well, my dear,' replied Mrs. Herbert, 'I am sure I shall insult him some day, when he is making his coarse, vulgar

speeches, and swearing at every word. He thinks he can pass for a fine gentleman and a man of wit and pleasure by uttering an oath every time he opens his mouth.'

With regard to this latter accusation against Vezey, good Mrs. Herbert was somewhat inconsistent, inasmuch as many of her male friends, whom she, nevertheless, much esteemed, were not more scrupulous as regards swearing, even in the presence of ladies, than was the culprit Vezey ; for at that time it was considered to be a qualification of a fine gentleman to rap out an oath at every other word. But then Vezey was a sugar-baker's son, and, as Mrs. Herbert often said, he had no business to affect to be a gentleman of condition.

' Well, my dear madam, said Margaret, trying to soften her friend's vexation at the young man, ' he is very rich, and wishes to be with people of quality. There is no harm in his trying to be a polite gentleman.'

‘I tell you, Margaret,’ said Mrs. Herbert, very sharply, ‘I will insult him some day. I have often been on the point of speaking my mind very plainly to him.’

Unconsciously, indeed, the good lady had at times done this, having uttered thoughts aloud far from complimentary to the Bristol sugar-baker’s son, who certainly, had he possessed any great amount of delicacy or fine feeling, would have ceased to visit a house the mistress of which held him in such small repute.

But he was not a gentleman, nor did he look like one, as he now came down the long gravel path, walking with clumsy, awkward gait, holding his snuff-box in one hand, and trying with the other to keep his rapier from getting between his legs and tripping him up.

He was an undersized little fellow, very plain of feature, but dressed in the height of fashion, and disporting all the colours of the rainbow in his velvet coat, brocaded waistcoat, breeches, and long hose.

‘Good lack ! what a sight,’ exclaimed

Mrs. Herbert, as she surveyed the approaching form of her visitor. 'Poor Richard hath scant taste in dress, and becomes fine clothes ill enough, but still he hath the manners and bearing of a gentleman ; this man hath sugar-baker writ on his face.'

Margaret, who was used to these sallies on the part of her friend, made no reply ; and indeed it would have been difficult to find an answer to Mrs. Herbert's last somewhat extraordinary assertion.

By this time Master Vezey had reached the harbour, and he doffed with an air of exaggerated gallantry his hat, with the Monmouth cock, which he wore barely perched on the top of his monstrous periwig, whilst Mrs. Herbert cast a glance of indignant contempt upon the orange coloured bows of ribbon placed around it.

'Good morning, honoured madam,' said Mr. Vezey ; 'I positively rejoice at the absence of my friend Mr. Herbert, since it gives me the satisfaction of enjoying an interview with yourself and Miss Musgrave.'

'Then your satisfaction will be of short

duration, I fear,' replied Mrs. Herbert tartly, 'for Edward will be back shortly.'

'Oh, I am positively in despair,' responded Mr. Vezey, affecting to regret this intelligence; and then he proceeded to pay some exaggerated compliments to Margaret, after which, lounging against the outer side of the arbour, he began very assiduously to comb out the curls of his peruke, and heard with perfect indifference the expression, every now and then, of Mrs. Herbert's thoughts, being no stranger to her inveterate habit.—'Tiresome, awkward loon! What business hath he to wear a rapier? He nearly fell coming down the walk, and then he trampled on my carnations.'

'Edward hath gone to Pall Mall, to see the playing there,' interposed Margaret, who always tried to make a diversion on such occasions; 'tis a vastly amusing sight.'

'Aye, but give me such a scene as this,' replied Vezey, with an air of affected rapture; 'these fair flowers and their rare fragrance: sweets to the sweet, fair to the fair,'

he added, waving his hand towards the ladies. 'I vow——'

An abrupt end, however, was put to his rhapsody, for in gesticulating and moving his head, his periwig was suddenly caught by the thorns of a sweet-briar, which mingling with the perfumed blossoms of some trumpet honeysuckle, climbed about the entrance to the arbour.

So great was Mr. Vezey's dilemma, that Margaret was obliged to come to his rescue, and, amidst the ill-concealed mirth of Mrs. Herbert, released him from a durance from which he could not otherwise have escaped, except wigless.

When he was released, Mr. Vezey thought it best to keep clear of the sweet-briar, and so seated himself by Mrs. Herbert, and after again combing the disordered curls of his periwig, he exhibited to her his elaborately-chased ivory comb, and asked her opinion of it. It ought to be, he declared, a very handsome one, he had paid enough for it. Could she guess what it had cost?

Mrs. Herbert was saved the trouble of complying with a request which had caused her to glance, with significant contempt, from Vezey to Margaret, by the approach of Edward, who had just returned home.

After exchanging greetings with young Vezey, Edward inquired how long the latter had been waiting for him.

‘I have been here but a few minutes,’ replied Vezey, ‘but I fear I have disturbed the ladies: your honoured mother, a most graceful and charming Penelope, was plying her needle with assiduity, and Miss Margaret was reading aloud, I presume.’

‘My dear child,’ said Mrs. Herbert, not making any reply to Vezey’s speech, ‘I find I have no more silver thread; will you get me some? ’tis in the little drawer of my cypress-wood table.’

As Margaret tripped off, Mrs. Herbert added, in a lower tone, uttering as usual, unconsciously, her thoughts aloud:

‘Much he knows about Penelope—as much as I do of sugar-baking. I wish he would go.’

Vezey only winked at Edward, showing his utter indifference to Mrs. Herbert's sarcasms, and then proceeded to question the lady about her work.

'A mighty fine table-cover that will be, madam, but I don't like that animal's head. Pray, what is it meant for? It looks vastly like the head of an old tom cat.'

'Sir,' replied Mrs. Herbert, in a tone of concentrated scorn, ''tis the crest of the Poveys, which, if you can understand, I describe thus—*out of a mural crown, a griffin's head, charged with an annulet.*'

'What may be the meaning of that last word, madam?' asked Vezey.

'Nay, sir, I cannot undertake to teach you heraldry,' replied the lady sharply. Then she continued, speaking her thoughts in her usual quick undertone, but so as to be distinctly heard—'Stupid man!—what has a sugar-baker's son to do with heraldry?'

The sugar-baker's son looked a little disconcerted.

'Who brought this?' asked Edward of

a servant who at that moment came forward and handed him a note.

‘A man, sir, and he says he’ll wait for an answer.’

Mrs. Herbert, who watched her son rather suspiciously, as he opened the missive, written on not very clean or elegant-looking paper, saw that he started and looked somewhat distressed, as he glanced over its contents.

‘May I ask Ned, from whom your letter is?’ she said rather abruptly.

‘Why yes, my dear mother, ’tis from poor Dick.’

‘Poor Dick do you say? Then I suppose something is wrong. Mr. Vezey is his friend, so I may speak before him.’

‘Dick is in a sponging house,’ replied Edward. ‘He hath been arrested for £10, it seems, at the suit of a rascally tailor, called Lappet. I shall go to him at once.’

‘So then ’twas all false about his owing ten guineas to that Dutch fellow, Boots?’ exclaimed Mrs. Herbert, in a burst of indignation, which made her regardless of

Vezey's presence. 'Of course it was for this tailor he wanted this money. He is incorrigible with his tailor's bills. Well, after this, whatever happens I will have nothing more to do with him.'

Edward looked puzzled, but defended his cousin, and said he would go and find out the truth of the story, for he was sure there was some mistake—some great mistake.

Vezey, who had remained silent, now cried out with a provoking grin on his face :

'Egad, it's all explained now ; why, my Lord Melton and I saw Dick Nash yesterday in Pall Mall along with a fellow in a rusty coat and an old periwig, who was holding him by the button. My lord vowed the fellow had the cut of a bailiff. And, egad, the bailiff did not seem to think there was some mistake.'

CHAPTER VII.

THE SPONGING HOUSE.

A FEW hours before Edward Herbert received the letter from his cousin from the sponging house, that gentleman was sleeping peacefully at his lodgings in Blackman Street, Southwark, little recking of the evil genius that was lying in wait for him, in the shape of a mean, shabby-looking man, with his hat cocked fiercely on the top of his head, who from an early hour had been parading up and down the street, ever keeping his eye watchfully on the door of the house which sheltered our hero. Twice or thrice, however, before the street began to wake up into life, the man dived into one of the old inns in the

Borough, with their spacious court-yards and wooden galleries running round them ; not so old, however, were those inns in those days, for a great portion of the Tabard, or Talbot, as it was called in 1677, with its memories of Chaucer, had only been rebuilt in that year. Each time the shabby-looking man issued from the inn his rubicund nose glowed still more fiercely, and became almost Bardolfian ; but his step was quite firm, and he seemed to have all his wits about him. He had the appearance of a man who was used to lying in ambush at street corners, and his stealthy motions bore no inapt resemblance to those of a cat when watching for a mouse. When, at length, the clock of the old church of St. George the Martyr had given out the hour of ten, he seemed to think it was time for action, for, fastening the top button of his dilapidated coat, to hide the still more dilapidated waistcoat, he crossed boldly over to the opposite side of the way, and knocked with an air of confidence at the door of the house over which,

for some two or three hours, he had kept watch and ward.

The door was soon opened by a pleasant-looking middle-aged woman.

‘Captain Richard Nash at home?’ asked the stranger.

‘You are the gentleman he expects, I suppose?’ replied the woman, holding the door fully open, as though to let her interlocutor enter.

‘Yes, certainly,’ replied the latter, with a grin, as he dived into the passage.

Upstairs marched the landlady, followed by the shabby man, who left an odour of brandy in his track.

Nash was sleeping soundly, it appeared, for the first two or three knocks at his chamber door failed to arouse him. The truth was, he had not sought his couch till the so-called small hours of the night. Before coming home on the previous evening, he had gone with his new friend Callender to the poor abode of the latter in the Mint, an assemblage of mean, irregularly built dwellings, and a place of very questionable re-

pute, though poor debtors were glad to find a home there, even if they were necessitated to herd with vagabonds, rogues, or felons.

Nash had been introduced to the old mother, and the young, wan-looking wife, and the two poor little wretches, as their father styled them ; and when the women came to hear of the beneficence of their visitor, they joined their entreaties to Callender's that he would stay and sup with them. Nash consented willingly ; so some slices from a chine of cold roast beef were procured from an inn, garnished with a dish of Lombard lettuce, onions and radishes. Callender also brought in a flagon of ale, and a pleasant few hours the little party spent together ; and when Nash bid them farewell, long after midnight, Callender accompanied him to the door of his lodgings, leaving him with the assurance that he would come betimes in the morning with his five-act play, not anticipating that he would oversleep himself, as a consequence of his unusual dissipation of the previous evening.

The landlady's third knock aroused Nash from his slumbers, and he called out, 'What's the matter, Mrs. Nixon ?'

'Tis the gentleman, sir, you expected.'

'Oh, very well, ask him to be good enough to walk upstairs.'

The shabby man, having already come thus far, now proceeded to walk into the bedroom. Our hero was lying on his side, feeling very comfortable, and quite ready for taking another nap, should the five-act play produce any somniferous effects upon him ; so he said :

'Tis mighty kind of you to come so early, Mr. Callender, but I feel a little tired, so I'll just stretch myself in bed a bit longer, while you read me an act or two.'

Nash heard the rustling of paper, and then, raising himself on his elbow, to salute, as he supposed, his friend Callender, found himself face to face with the shabby man.

'The devil !' exclaimed Nash, who probably had a keen idea as to the quality of his unwelcome visitor.

‘Not exactly, sir,’ replied the shabby man, with a leer and a grin ; then, touching our hero on the shoulder, he said, ‘Axing your pardon, captain, but you are my prisoner ; I arrest you.’

‘I wasn’t far wrong,’ replied Nash, with a scornful laugh ; ‘if not Satan himself, thou art one of his imps, a cursed limb of the law. Well,’ he added, lying himself down very coolly on his back, and hoisting up his knees in the bed, ‘who is my benevolent creditor ? Let us know all about it.’

‘This here bit of parchment,’ replied the bailiff, producing his writ, ‘will tell you, captain, as how you owe Luke Lappet, tailor, £10.’

‘Ay, I knew that before,’ answered Nash, in a tone of great indifference ; ‘but let us see your parchment ; what is it ?’

‘It’s a *raps ad restoration*,’ replied the bailiff, looking very profound, ‘but here’s a true copy of it,’ he added, handing the paper to Nash, but keeping fast hold of the writ ; ‘you can read it yourself.’

‘“*Capias ad respondendum*,” you ass,’

exclaimed Nash; 'tis not the first I've seen.'

'That's like enough, captain,' replied the bailiff; 'but the morning is getting on. I'm sorry to disturb you, captain, as you seems so comfortable, but I must ask you to get up and come with me.'

'Let me read this rubbish first,' answered Nash, opening the paper:—' "*William and Mary, by the grace of*"—My old aunt,' muttered Nash to himself, 'would say by the knavery of rogues;' and then in a louder key he proceeded to read the document—" *of England, Scotland, France, and Ireland, king and queen, defenders of the faith, and so forth, to the Sheriff of Surrey greeting,*"—here Nash paused for a moment, and looking at the bailiff, said, with a hearty laugh, 'What gibberish this is, calling our most gracious sovereigns king and queen of France, when they don't hold a rood of land in any part of that country.'

'I don't know nothing about that, sir,' replied the bailiff, 'but I knows my dooty,

so you must just please to come out of that there bed, captain.'

' "*We command you,*" ' said Nash, resuming his reading, in a slow deliberate tone, '*that you take Richard Nash, a Captain in the Princess Anne of Denmark's regiment of Foot, if he may be found in your bailiwick, and him safely keep, so that you may have his body before our justices at Westminster, from the day of Michaelmas*" '—here Nash paused abruptly, and asked the bailiff how he had found out where he was.

The latter chuckled, laid his finger alongside of his nose, winked at Nash, and replied :

' Let Levi Solomons alone for that, captain.'

' I thought you were a child of Israel,' said Nash, gazing significantly at Solomons' rubicund and hooked nose.—"*To answer to Luke Lappet, tailor,*" " he continued again, reading from the paper, '*of a plea that he render to him ten pounds, which he owes him and unjustly retains.*" The tailor may

go to the devil,' said Nash who now threw aside the paper, and sat up in the bed, as a preliminary step towards getting up; 'I tell you what, Solomon, or Moses, or whatever your name is——'

'Levi Solomons, if you please, captain,' interposed the bailiff.

'Well, never mind. I was telling you that this tailor fellow was a confounded rogue; his bill is double what it ought to be; but I say Moses——'

'I axes your pardon, sir, but my name is Solomons; Levi Solomons.'

'Well then, Levi Solomons, why didn't you look after me at Canterbury?'

'What! captain! my service to you, sir! but I sees your honour is a free joker. What! me come to where you was quartered! No, no, I am not so simple as all that, captain, whatsoever I looks.'

'I never said you had the appearance of being simple, Levi,' replied Nash, lazily putting one leg out of the bed; 'on the contrary, you are as sly-looking a rascal as ever I clapped my eyes on; but I can't

understand why you shouldn't have come to Canterbury.'

'Not if I had any value for my precious bones, sir,' answered the bailiff, shaking his head. 'Oons, captain, blankets is uncommon nice things on a winter's night, but they isn't nice things to be tossed in, and least of all when they are rotten and have got holes in 'em.'

'I see, I see!' said Nash, laughing immoderately; 'you are a very prudent man, Moses——'

'Solomons, by your leave, captain,' said the bailiff, somewhat nettled at Nash's persistent misnomer of him.

'Well then, Solomons, I see you are very circumspect, and have a due regard for your bones; for assuredly an you had come to our quarters, and I had bethought me of it, I would have made some of my men toss you.'

'I believe you there, captain,' said the bailiff, again laying his finger on the side of his nose and winking. 'You military gemmen are mighty fond of a joke. I've

been tossed more than once, and I shouldn't so particularly object to the game if the blanket was sound ; but oons, sir, I was used most scurvily the last time I was tossed, faith I was. The blanket was that tender that it split with the first toss, and through it I dropped on to the hard stones. I warrant you, captain, I was in a sweet pickle ; I thought, for sure, every bone in my body was broken. But come, captain, you must get up and dress.'

'How can I dress, when you make me almost expire with laughter ?' cried Nash, wiping away the tears from his eyes, and then proceeding to draw on his long *stockings*. 'I don't wonder you keep clear of the military, Moses—Levi—I beg pardon.'

'I've made up my mind to one thing,' said Solomons, in a very solemn tone, 'an I am forced to go among the officers again, I'll take my own blanket with me, one that's good and strong, and then if they gets up to their favourite little game again, I shall say to 'em, "Well, gemmen, if I am to be tossed, perhaps you'll be so obliging

as to let me have the use of my own blanket.”’

‘I’ faith! ’tis a capital idea,’ replied Nash; ‘but now, Levi, you may just walk down to my room below stairs. I’ll be with you in a few minutes. Clever as you are, I don’t think you are much of a valet.’

‘Law now, captain,’ replied Solomons, with an aggrieved air, ‘do I look like a greenhead? Do you think I should be such a fool as to leave you alone in this here room? Why, in course I shouldn’t; maybe you would come down, maybe you wouldn’t, and when I came up I should find you flown.’

‘Why, where should I go, man? I couldn’t drop out of window without the risk of breaking my neck, and I couldn’t escape by the door, when you would be listening below with ears wide open.’

‘’Tis not for me to say what little fetch you would get up to,’ replied Solomons, shrugging his shoulders. ‘You military

gemmen best knows how to smuggle yourselves out of places where you was thought safely trapped, but all I knows is, I should find you gone when you was wanted. No, no, captain, I'm not to be taken in i' that fashion,' said the bailiff, with a wink ; 'Levi Solomons isn't to be beaten quite out o' th' pit.'

'Well, well, Moses, an you will stay with me, I must just dress as soon as I can, and then I will get breakfast ; I suppose you will not object to that ?'

Nash finished his breakfast at his lodging, but he dined in a very different place, and with a deal more company. Let us look in upon him in the common dining-room of the sponging-house, before his cousin, Edward Herbert arrives, in answer to the note he had received from the captive.

The chamber was sufficiently large, but the low ceiling, blackened with smoke, the walls dirt-begrimed, and, in many places, scribbled over with the names of prisoners and doggrel rhymes, or stained with liquor ; and the small panes of glass in the barred

windows, dim and dusky, gave the room, at best, but a gloomy appearance.

The keeper of the sponging house chanced to have a good many debtors in his custody at this time, not a few of whom, unwilling or unable to pay his exorbitant charges for a private apartment, chose to remain in the public room. Similar feelings having influenced Nash, here he sat, eating, with apparent relish, his dinner of boiled beef and greens, brought in from a neighbouring cook-shop by his fiery-nosed captor. Not a very dainty dinner this, certainly, for a beau and an officer in the army ; but, truth to say, Nash was ever singularly indifferent in the matter of eating—his tastes were simple and easily satisfied. The dinner itself suited him well enough, but the appointments of the table, to a man so nice in his notions as to cleanliness, were highly offensive. The bit of ragged table-cloth that had been spread for him was stained with beer and greasy marks. His drinking goblet had been only half washed, and the pewter plate and dish, knife and fork, were equally dirty.

Nash was seated at one end of the long table, and down either side sat, stood, or lounged the other prisoners. Some were dining, others drinking, the steam of hot bacon or fried rabbits mingling with the fumes of brandy, aqua-vitæ, rum, cider, and various kinds of ale. Not a few were smoking, and some three or four had already commenced playing at cards and dice, diversions which usually went on, with but few interruptions, morning, noon, and night, in that miserable room.

Nash now pushed back his empty platter, and filled again with ale the empty goblet of an old man, whom, with his usual ready generosity, he invited to share his meal. Poor old fellow, he had been introduced into the room soon after Nash's arrival, and an immediate onslaught had been made upon him by the other prisoners, under the form of a vociferous demand for garnish—so called, meaning some money wherewith to buy drink. Our hero, who had also been called upon to pay for his footing, had at once appeased the gentie-

men by despatching the fiery-nosed bailiff for the necessary ingredients wherewith to concoct a bowl of punch ; but this poor old man declared that he had not a shilling in his purse, an avowal which, instead of exciting pity, seemed only to kindle the wrath of his fellow-prisoners, and he would have fared badly had not Nash given half-a-crown for him, for the purchase of more punch, and then invited him to share his dinner. This was the more kind, as the half-crown was the last piece Master Richard had in his purse ; but when relieving others, our beau seldom thought of himself or of the morrow.

The old man he had just befriended was apparently a countryman ; he wore a black periwig, as straight as the pinions of a raven, a speckled handkerchief tied under his chin, and a brown frieze coat. He very speedily informed Nash that he was a farmer, and that he had but lately come up to town, and having made himself responsible for the debts of a scapegrace son, had just been arrested for one of them.

He related all this with much circumlocution and detail, but after a while Nash grew inattentive, for he was watching the card players. Young as he was, cards possessed a great attraction for him ; he loved play, and was well skilled in it. Of this last fact, however, two of the players, one a shabby-genteel civilian, and the other a shabby military man, were not, of course, aware, and they imagined, from his eager gaze at the players, and from his youthful appearance, that he was a bird, and that he was a bird that might be easily plucked. The officer accordingly invited Nash, as a brother-in-arms, to join in a game, to which the latter at once consented. A game at whist with swabbers* was proposed, and

* At the beginning of the eighteenth century, whist was played with *swabbers*. Clergymen used generally to play whist with swabbers. Swabbers were so called because those who had certain cards in their hands, as *aces*, were entitled to take up a share of the stake, independent of the general event of the game. The term *swabber* might be a nautical one, the winner who cleared the board of this stake

another gentleman being invited to make a fourth at the game, after some pressing consented to do so. The shabby military man wore his own hair, his frock was of bear skin, with skirts about half a foot long, an hussar waistcoat, scarlet breeches, and blue worsted stockings rolled almost half way up his thighs, each individual article of his attire being the worse for wear; on his feet was a pair of very high-heeled shoes, half covered with broad buckles of brass, none of the brightest; this completed his costume.

The shabby civilian sported a tie wig, a coat once brocaded, but now much tattered and tarnished, and a waistcoat richly trimmed heretofore, but now almost stripped of its trimming. His ruffles were long and very dirty, and a large muff

being compared by sailors to the *swabber* who clears the deck of a ship.

Swabbers were afterwards banished from whist, as it is a game which requires so much skill and attention as not to brook interruption.—*Universal Magazine* for 1788, page 299.

hanging from one of his buttons was as bare from wear as the back of a sheep newly-shorn.

‘Sir,’ said the civilian addressing Nash, in a pompous tone, ‘I am a man of family, and one of fortune, but my family is, through a Chancery suit, now reduced to poverty. But that is neither here nor there. Gentlemen of position must have some pastime wherewith to wile away the dreary hours in this wretched den; and,’ he said, turning to his friend the officer, who sat smiling and bowing his approbation, ‘what more agreeable diversion is there than a game of cards?’

‘My friend Beetham,’ chimed in the officer, looking first at the civilian, then at Nash, whilst he shuffled a pack of greasy, dirty cards, ‘says rightly. Sir, we are not professed players or gamblers. No, no! we should come off badly with such gentry; we are men of honour; we play merely for amusement.’

Nash’s partner, who was little better than a youth, seemed so impressed with

the truth of these observations that he quite cast off the reluctance which he had at first shown when asked to play ; but Nash himself was not so easily deceived, for seeing very plainly that the two shabby gentlemen had conceived the benevolent intention of stripping two, as they supposed them to be, inexperienced youngsters of all they possessed, he could not restrain a feeling of satisfaction at the thought that the tables would probably be turned, and that he should replenish his purse from those of his antagonists.

All preliminaries being now settled and the cards dealt out, the game began.

Nash soon perceived that his young partner was a tolerably fair player, and our hero's very superior skill at whist soon began to make itself manifest ; and now lowering glances of mutual disappointment, dissatisfaction, and wrath were exchanged between Beetham and the officer. In vain the two latter exerted all their ingenuity : all the luck seemed on Nash's side.

'Zounds,' vociferated the officer, in tones

of mingled grief and rage, as he saw a good crown piece of his pass into our hero's custody. 'Tis impossible to play with such a din in one's ears.'

And a din there was, truly, though this was not the cause of the officer's ill luck. High above riotous peals of laughter, voices loud in passion or mirth, glasses jingling and feet stamping in unison, rose the rattle of the dice, with which several men, seated close to the whist party, were playing at the gambling and hazardous game of bone-ace. The voices of these latter gentry almost drowned the agonised exclamation of the officer when he saw another half-crown in the possession of his intended victim.

One of the dice players swore the cast was not fair, and a second declared furiously that the dice were loaded. Then another shouted out that the cast was a four and a five, whilst his antagonist asserted, with a bitter imprecation, that it was a five and a six. One bet all he had that he was right, and another swore that the dice

were false and of a high cut, without a four.

The noise and tumult almost threatened a riot, and loud in the mouths of the gamblers were to be heard the words, Honour, Honesty, Friendship. The rubber in which our hero and his companions had been engaged being over, he sat surveying the scene, and conjectured, not, perhaps, wrongly, that those gentry who were the most strenuous in proclaiming their honour, honesty and friendship, were, of all, the greatest rogues.

When quiet was a little restored, our whist players began another game ; but a settled sullen frown had now gathered on the officer's brow, and possibly distracted by the loss of his money, or racked with fear as to further success on the part of Nash, he unfortunately revoked, an indiscretion at once noted by our hero's young partner, who ventured mildly to point out his mistake to the officer, who, at this crisis, lost whatever patience he had left, and, striking the table furiously with his fist, cried out :

'Damme, sir! what do you mean by saying that?'

'I say what is true,' replied the youth, in a very determined manner, and unabashed by the glaring eyes and fierce gestures of the officer; 'I say you have revoked.'

'I am a man of honour, young sir,' thundered the latter. 'Look'e, sir, my friend and I are men of honour, sir, and I would have you to know, sir, that I'll not have disparaging reflections cast upon my honour. Blood and wounds, sir!' continued the officer, waxing more furious at seeing the composure of his young opponent, 'an I had but my sword by my side, I would cut your ears off; I would ram your lie down your throat.'

''Twas no lie,' said the youth doggedly. 'I say you did revoke.'

'Look'e, sir, I'll pull your nose!' roared the officer furiously. 'You pitiful hop-o'-my-thumb coxcomb.'

'An you try that, I'll see if I cannot

pull your's,' replied the youth, with an air of great indifference.

This reply having provoked the laughter of the rest of the company, who had gathered round the disputants, increased the ire of the officer, who now, hastily divesting himself of his coat and waistcoat, advanced towards the youth, and putting himself into an elegant attitude of manual offence, challenged the latter to fight, whilst he at the same time assured the bystanders that the fellow was a ——— Popish cur. The youth at once declared his willingness to have a turn at fisticuffs, and bared a muscular arm, at the sight of which, and of the truly scientific manner in which he protected his sides with his elbows and arms, the boisterous son of Mars was evidently somewhat daunted, and probably he was not sorry when the abrupt entrance of the keeper of the sponging house stayed the further progress of the fray.

'Come, come, Captain Bernard,' said the keeper, 'I'll have no brawling here ; as for

this youngster being a Papish, what then ? I know a great many Papishes ; I've never lost nowt by 'em, they've always paid me their money honestly ; and my maxim is, as one man's money is as good as another's ; that's my religion. Put your coat on, captain.'

'Very true,' chimed in a dilapidated-looking old Tory prisoner, with a ragged coat and a rubicund visage. 'I care not what religion a man be, an he be not a Presbyterian. If the Rump were uppermost again, there would be an end of all cards, and no living in old England.'

Edward Herbert, who had remained on the threshold, gazing with astonishment at this scene of wild anarchy and confusion, now came forward, and grasping his cousin's hands, informed him in affectionate terms, that he had satisfied his creditor, and that he was now at liberty to depart with him.

When the two cousins repaired to Nash's lodging in Blackman Street, they found there the grateful Callender. He

had been almost distracted at the fate of his benefactor, which he had learned on coming laden with his five-act play, a few minutes after Nash's departure with the bailiff, and he had passed the whole day running about in a vain attempt to find the particular sponging house his benefactor had been taken to.

So it was that Edward learned how his mother's ten guineas had gone, and of course he told her ; and the sun did not go down on her anger that day.

CHAPTER VIII.

GENEROUS BUT NOT JUST.

A BLEAK wintry day was the 5th day of March, 1695, and a little party of gentlemen, assembled in a spacious chamber, on an upper floor of Lord Merton's house, which stood not very far from the palace of Whitehall, were gathered in a group, round the blazing fire of sea coal, the bright reflection from which cast a ruddy glow over their sombre habiliments, and lent a cheerful aspect to the otherwise somewhat gloomy appearance of the chamber. It was a true March day, and not even the thick draperies of green saye, drawn partly over the windows, could wholly exclude the keen north-east wind, which came at

intervals in short icy gusts, and dashed particles of half-frozen snow against the casements.

It was about half-past nine in the morning, but since nine o'clock the bells of all the churches had been tolling mournfully, and crowds of people were gathered betwixt Whitehall and Westminster Abbey, the line of route to be taken by the procession, which was to accompany to their resting-place in the Abbey Church, the last remains of Queen Mary, the once blooming and beautiful girl, from whom her fond and indulgent father had parted with such sore anguish, when she left England as the bride of William of Orange.

If the lapse of years had robbed her form of its symmetry and elegance, and her face of its beauty, none the less did time and those evil influences to which she resigned herself rob her heart of its early affections, and cause Mary to act that cruel and unnatural part towards an ever-indulgent father, which forced from him that agonised cry, 'God help me! my

own children have forsaken me in my distress.'

However, whilst one party held Mary in abhorrence, the other, and that the predominant party, worshipped her as a pious and most beloved saint and queen, and so she was to be buried with all regal pomp, and with every show of mourning and respect.

Of the little party assembled in Lord Merton's house, the majority were, like that nobleman himself, only very lukewarm partisans of William III.; but there were two or three staunch Jacobites, and amongst them Ned Herbert, who, from curiosity, were going to witness the funeral procession.

However, Whigs and Tories, as they stood gathered round the fire, were in a very gay frame of mind, and were all laughing heartily over a story which Robert Vezey had just been telling them, and which he now prepared to relate over again for the edification of Herbert, who had but just arrived, the prime actor in

the little anecdote being that gentleman's cousin, Richard Nash.

Dick was now no longer a son of Mars, for he had forsaken that gallant profession, and he had, since some months past, entered his name as a student in the Middle Temple books. The life of a soldier he had soon wearied of, for Miss Threadneedle had had, as we have said, successors in his affections, and he had found that the profession of arms imposed restraints on his liberty, and demanded the performance of duties quite incompatible with that spirit of gallantry by which he was at that time possessed, and which made him eager to dance attendance, at all seasons, on that special charmer whose slave he was for the time being.

'You must know, Herbert,' said Vezey, beginning his tale for the second time, 'that your cousin owed me twenty pounds.'

'That is not surprising,' replied Herbert, laughing, and shrugging his shoulders. 'Dick is an inveterate borrower.'

‘And I could not get my twenty pounds back.’

‘That is still less surprising, Vezey; ’twould have astonished me infinitely more to have heard that you had gotten your money again.’

‘Ay, but I have though.’

‘The devil you have!’ exclaimed Herbert, who gazed at him incredulously, for a moment, and then fell a laughing. ‘I say, you must be a conjurer, Vezey. My dear cousin Dick is prone to borrow, but I never yet knew him return a loan.’

‘No, truly, I have learnt that from experience. I had asked him a hundred times, but he always made some excuse, so at last I hit upon a device, whereby I thought to recover my money and yet not lose my friend, for you know I have an affection for Nash. And Frazer,’ added Vezey, nodding towards a tall, handsome young Scotchman, standing a few paces off, ‘gave me his assistance towards carrying out my scheme.’

‘’Twas a sublime idea,’ exclaimed Lord

Merton, laughing and taking up the story. 'Vezey goes to Frazer and says, "My dear fellow, Nash owes me twenty pounds ; he won't pay a debt, but he is so generous that he will lend to any friend in need ; will you go and try to borrow that amount from him and bring the money to me ? I think he will lend to you, though he won't pay me. He will be generous though he won't be just."'

'Imagine your cousin's feelings, Herbert,' said Frazer, 'when I appeared before him, and, with an air of distraction, told him I should be ruined and undone completely if he could not lend me twenty pounds ; that I had been to every one of my acquaintance and couldn't get so much as a crown from any one. I had hardly finished speaking, when Nash produced the money.'

'And Frazer brought it all at once to me,' said Vezey, with a chuckle. 'But fancy, Herbert, Master Dick Nash saying, with a benign smile, as he gave the money, "There, my dear fellow, take these few pounds and welcome ; 'tis only well I did

not part with them yesterday to a sordid, importunate knave, who came pestering me for a debt, just the same amount, which the rascal is in no possible need of." I was the rascal, you know.'

The laughter of the company had barely subsided when Master Richard Nash himself was ushered into the room. After he had exchanged greetings with Lord Merton and his other friends, he said to Vezey :

'Seeing you, my dear fellow, reminds me that I am still in your debt, and, as ill luck will have it, I can't yet clear it off. The jade Fortune has played me some slippery tricks lately, and I was never so d——bly out of cash ; the billiard-room has stripped me bare, but in a few days——'

'Pray don't distress yourself, my dear friend,' said Vezey, amidst the ill-suppressed mirth of the company, 'for there is no longer any cause for it. Don't you remember that you have paid me?'

'Paid you, Vezey ! What do you mean ?'

'My dear fellow,' said Vezey, with diffi-

culty keeping his gravity, 'you know you lent twenty pounds to Frazer yesterday, and he lent it to me—that's all. So just give him your receipt and you shall have mine.'

'Perdition seize thee!' cried out Nash in a rage; 'thou hast been one too many for me! You demanded a debt—Frazer asked a favour; to pay thee would not increase our friendship, but 'to lend to him was cementing a new friendship by conferring a new obligation. 'Twas a scurvy trick, and I'll never forgive you for it, Vezey.'

Nash would have gone on giving still further vent to his indignation, had not one of the party announced that the procession was beginning to form.

'This is like to be a grand pageant of woe over the burial of a breaker of the fifth commandment,' said Herbert, in a tone of contempt, to Frazer, a Jacobite like himself, as they took their stand at one of the casements, and surveyed the first portion of the procession, consisting of the

Knight Marshal's men and deputy, followed by three hundred men and women in mourning gowns and hoods.

'Say, rather, the burial of that glorious saint, Queen Mary,' observed a mischievous young Whig, standing at Herbert's elbow, and who was said to be, like most of Lord Merton's acquaintances, rather more of a Tory than a Whig.

'Ay, there are differences of opinion,' replied Herbert, carelessly; 'and so there are amongst some of those gentry,' he added, indicating the members of the House of Commons, in their long gowns, who, preceded by their Speaker, having his train held up, and the mace borne before him, were now slowly defiling past the house, 'for all they have such woe-begone visages.'

'Sure you wouldn't have 'em laugh, would you?' growled Nash, who had not yet recovered his temper, and so felt inclined to quarrel and contradict. 'There be many of 'em true mourners, I'll warrant. As for these titled gentry,' he added, after

a pause, as the Members of the House of Peers, in their turn, passed by, the Lord Keeper, their speaker, preceding them, with mace and purse carried before, 'I'll not answer for all of them—some are Jacobites in disguise.'

'Why, how now, Nash,' cried out Lord Merton ; 'art abusing my order ?'

''Tis only his spleen,' said Vezey, laughing, 'because he has been unwittingly drawn into paying a debt. Why, we all know he prefers a bow from a lord to a dinner from a commoner.'

A portion of the procession was now passing which offered more interest, and for a few moments the gentlemen watched attentively the striking scene beneath. Borne by different great noblemen, amongst whom were conspicuous the Earls of Denbigh, Stamford, Bridgewater, and Suffolk, the gorgeous emblazoned banners of Chester, Cornwall, and Wales, of Ireland and of Scotland, also those of England, and of France, and lastly, the Great Banner, floated in the icy breeze, whilst all their

brilliant hues of scarlet, gold, and azure contrasted with the sombre garb of the mourners and the leaden hue of the wintry sky.

‘That’s a fine piece of horseflesh,’ remarked Vezey, who considered himself an authority on all points that a gentleman ought to know, as the mourning steed was led past by Viscount Villiers, decked in funeral trappings, with arched neck prancing along.

‘Too cloddy shouldered by half,’ said Lord Merton, who, like most Yorkshiremen, was thoroughly conversant with the merits and demerits of a horse.

But now the culminating point of interest in the procession arrived, and conversation flagged again.

Preceded by the Marquis of Winchester, the late Queen’s Chamberlain, there slowly advanced an open chariot, covered with purple velvet, adorned with escutcheons and feathers, and drawn by eight horses. A truly regal funeral car, the coffin reposing on it, also covered with purple velvet, the pall being gold of cloth, whilst the

crown, orb, and sceptre glittered on a rich cushion, gorgeous and splendid accessories of woe, whilst the poor body lay festering beneath, in hideous decay. As the chariot passed Lord Merton's house, a stoppage occurred in the procession, and the car was brought to a standstill, and Frazer, who had espied a friend and countryman standing in the street beneath, went down with Lord Merton's invitation for him to come and join their party.

Snow had now begun to fall again, and the chariot, still stationary, became thinly covered with its pure white flakes.

'What a pity that 'tis not the fashion to canonise in our Church,' said Frazer, when he had returned, bringing with him his friend, whom he introduced to Lord Merton and the rest of the company.

'Well, you know Queen Mary hath been declared a saint already,' replied Lord Merton; 'I suppose 'tis she to whom you allude.'

'You are right,' said Frazer, laughing. 'We make saints without the aid of the Pope, it appears, for in the street they are

crying out that this fresh fallen snow is an emblem of the white soul that hath lately gone out of that royal body.'

'Faugh! this is too sickening,' cried Herbert, in a tone of disgust; 'are we to believe in signs, let us hearken to Dr. Fleetwood: he asks, doth it not seem like judgment, that Mary should have died in the same month, and almost at the same hour, of the fatal anniversary, when the king, her father, the victim of an unnatural rebellion, was forced to fly from Feversham? Hath she not been cut off in the middle of her days?'

'Fleetwood is a blasphemer, you know,' said Lord Merton, in a tone of assumed reproof. 'Like all you Tories, he is full of devilish rage and malice.'

'My lord,' said Frazer's clansman, 'you should go down into the street, and lift up your voice also in tones of mourning. Such sobs and wailing and weeping as filled the air, when this interpretation of the snow-covered coffin went round, I have never heard before.'

'Nay, 'tis quite sufficiently cold standing at the casement,' replied Lord Merton; 'the chariot is moving on again, but 'twill be midnight, I expect, before all these ladies will get to the Abbey, and I find small entertainment in watching them. Nash, 'twill be more to your taste to admire this bevy of fair ones, duchesses, countesses, baronesses—and perhaps some one of 'em will become enamoured of you.'

'Women are not attractive with weeping eyes and red noses,' replied Nash disdainfully, as he looked carelessly down into the street beneath, where, following the Duchess of Somerset, the chief mourner, there came a long file of ladies of high rank, all in deep mourning.

'Tis the fox and the grapes,' said Vezey, laughing; 'the game is too high; wait till the bedchamber women come.'

'Those who like to look at the maids of honour and bedchamber women, let 'em, said Nash scornfully; 'for my part, I have seen enough,' and as he spoke he walked towards the fire.

‘Oh,’ cried out Vezey presently, ‘look there!—ay, see that gentleman at the opposite window in sable garments!—who is he? By my honour, he is weeping, and hath pulled out his handkerchief to stem the torrent of his tears.’

‘Pr’ythee, Nash, come here,’ cried out Frazer, who had been looking over Vezey’s shoulder.

‘’Tis your friend Oldmixon, that malevolent scribbler, John Oldmixon.’

‘Marry, why do you call him my friend? I have little more friendship with the gentleman than yourself. I have only a slight knowledge of him.’

‘Oh, as for me,’ replied Frazer, ‘I would as lief talk to the d—l, as with such a virulent Whig. The slanderous cur!’

‘’Tis amusing to hear him,’ said Lord Merton; ‘all his talk is either of “Our Deliverer,” or of that pious and most beloved saint and queen, or, by way of variety, of the devilish malice of you Tories. I chanced to be in his company a little while ago at supper at my Lord Vyner’s,

and he entertained us with an account of the king's deportment, when Dr. Bates presented him with an address of condolence at Kensington from the Dissenting clergy. 'Twas on the 1st of January, just after the queen's decease. And then he told us how the royal tears trickled down the cheeks of the great prince, who so often appeared undaunted in the most terrifying dangers of battle.'

'Willy won't die of grief, though,' interposed Herbert, with a sneer. 'Did you see the last epigram epitaph on the daughter? It runs thus :

'Oh, blundering death ! I do thee ban,
That took the wife and left the man.' *

'Oldmixon himself shed tears, whilst he was telling the story,' continued Lord Merton, smiling, but taking no notice of his friend Herbert's interruption.

'Real tears ?' asked Herbert.

'Yes, real tears, Herbert ; egad they were ! but I ought to tell you that he had

* Miss Agnes Strickland's 'Queens of England,' vol. vi.

partaken freely of my Lord Vyner's Rhenish and you know some men weep under the influence of deep potations.'

'You haven't such a thing as an orange in the house, Merton?' asked Frazer.

'Plenty, I believe, but I thought, on principle, you never ate them.'

'No, I am like Mrs. Herbert; I have forsworn that fruit, but an' I had a rotten one, I would have tried if I could not have lodged it in Oldmixon's right eye, as he stands sideways there stretching his neck out of the window, to see the last of his pious and most beloved saint and queen. I' faith! she knows by this time what it is to depose a king and father.'

'You rank Jacobite!' exclaimed Lord Merton, laughing. 'Do you know that Oldmixon says Tories should not be reckoned as a part of the kingdom?'

'Then I suppose we are not Englishmen because we refuse to recognise a Dutch prince? Curious logic that!' said Herbert indignantly.

'Why, I can tell you what,' interposed

Frazer ; 'if the people were not kept down by the fear of the army, and the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act, great numbers would not be English, according to that virulent Whig. All the cry from the gentlemen in the taverns and the people out of doors at Bristol, at Norwich, in Warwickshire and Suffolk is, "No foreigners!" "No taxes!"'

'Well, well,' said Lord Merton, shrugging his shoulders, 'one king may be as good as another in the long run : that's my maxim.'

'Mine too,' observed Vezey.

'You had better not say as much before my mother, to-night, when you come to sup with us,' said Herbert smiling, 'or ten to one you'll hear her express her thoughts aloud, in her own fashion, with some not very favourable reflections upon yourself.'

'Oh, I shall not be abashed,' replied Lord Merton, gaily. 'I know your good lady mother's peculiarity. She hath more than once unconsciously condemned me in my own presence, but I

have a very great regard and esteem for her, natheless. However, I will propitiate her to-night, even to the extent of drinking to the destruction of the squeezed orange.'

'Ay, we'll drink to the destruction of the rotten orange,' said Frazer, who had also been invited to sup at Mrs. Herbert's.

'Here be the tag-rag and bob-tail of the procession passing now,' said Herbert, looking from the window.

'A most ungenteel way of speaking of the gentlemen pensioners and yeomen of the guard,' said one of the company.

'Heigh ho!' exclaimed Vezey, 'I suppose they have gotten her majesty's royal remains into the Abbey by this time.'

'And are singing the dirge,' said Nash.

'I'll sing you a dirge, fit and proper to be sung for, "the undutiful child of the kindest of princes,"' exclaimed Frazer, who thereupon sung out, in a fine, clear, and powerful voice, to the amusement of his friends, the following stanzas of a Jacobite

song, all the company joining in the chorus :

‘What’s the rhyme for porringer?
And what’s the rhyme for porringer?
A king he had a daughter fair,
And gave her to the Prince of Oranger.

Sing Anthony Katon, Keeton, O,
Sing Anthony Katon, Keeton, O,
Treveegonee, Treveegon, O,
Sing Killamy, Katon, Keeton, O.

And how did they requite him for’t?
And how did they requite him for’t?
They took the crown from off his head
And bade their soldiers fight him for’t.
Sing Anthony Katon, etc. *

* This old Jacobite song is given in Miss Strickland’s ‘Lives of the Queens of England’; but the version now given was one that was wont to be sung by an old gentleman who for many years was vice-president of the Antiquarian Society of Scotland. The version differs mainly from Miss Strickland’s in having the refrain, which her’s has not.

CHAPTER IX.

A YORKSHIRE PENANCE.

MANY parts of the old city of York retain not a few of the features they presented in the days when William III. sat on the throne of England.' Petergate, that narrow street of quaint old houses, with projecting upper stories and overhanging gable ends, covered with dusky red tiles, seems like a link of the past. Through openings, here and there, we catch a glimpse of the lofty towers of the cathedral ; and so it was in the seventeenth century, when in the mellow sunlight of an autumn afternoon, several noisy and vivacious young gentlemen sat over their Rhenish and sack, in a parlour of the Queen's Head,

from the casement of which, they also might have seen through an aperture between two of the tall houses facing them, the stately battlemented lantern tower, standing out in bold relief against the clear blue of a cloudless sky.

It was a sober, quiet inn, the Queen's Head, and an old house, even in those days, with its walls washed yellow, and with many small windows placed in all sorts of corners and nooks, with a total disregard to symmetry. Mine hostess—for mine host was dead—was as staid and respectable as her old house. Perhaps, through living so near the cathedral, almost under its shadow, she had contracted a certain gravity of demeanour, which all her household seemed to share in, save her lively and pretty young daughter, Jane, whose lovely face and arch looks distracted some of the young choristers, when she attended afternoon service at the cathedral.

Mrs. Rowland's guests in the best parlour were Lord Merton, Herbert, Nash, and Vezey, all of whom that nobleman had

invited for a few weeks' shooting, and some country friends made up the merry party.

Lord Merton's fine seat was situated at some little distance from York, so, as he wished to introduce his London acquaintance to the old cathedral city, he had engaged rooms for the occasion at the Queen's Head, where he and his companions, sufficiently riotous at times, sorely tried the patience of Mrs. Rowland.

On this particular afternoon they were unusually uproarious, and were fully prepared for a frolic, if only they could devise one.

In truth, the age of which we are writing was an age of such kind of wit as is most distant from wisdom, and men took more pains to show what wit they thought they had. A man of high humour would drink no wine but what had been strained through his mistress's sacque, or he would eat a pair of her slippers, tossed up in a fricassee, or he would walk about the town without coat or waistcoat to divert the ladies.

‘Nash, you have played me a scurvy trick,’ said Lord Merton, lolling back in his chair, and holding up a crystal goblet of Rhenish.

‘How now?’ asked Nash, in some amazement; ‘what have I done?’

‘Forestalled me in the affections of that sweet young creature, Mistress Jane; she hath no eyes but for thee: ’tis unpardonable that you should confiscate all the good things to yourself in this manner; you are the luckiest dog alive.’

‘You accuse me without foundation,’ replied Nash, with a little smirk of conceit: ‘can I help a poor young creature encouraging a feeling of tenderness for one who, alas! hath no heart to give?’ he added, in more tender tones; for having recently been jilted, he professed to have forsworn the fair sex.

Nash’s reply to Lord Merton was received with ironical laughter, as all the company knew well that Miss Jane reserved her sweetest smiles for gentlemen of more exalted rank and with

longer purses than Master Richard Nash owned.

‘And as for my being a lucky dog,’ resumed Nash, raising his hands in deprecation of such a remark, ‘d’ye call it lucky to have spent your last guinea, and not know where to get another?’

‘Here’s Vezey will gladly lend you twenty pounds,’ said Lord Merton, laughing.

‘No, I won’t, lest I shouldn’t find a friend again to borrow my own loan for me; but I’ll give him fifty guineas.’

‘You will?’ said Nash, with an incredulous look.

‘Ay, upon one condition,’ said Vezey, slyly.

‘And what may that be?’

‘Why, you know we were remarking yesterday afternoon how grim and austere some of the folks looked when they were coming out of the cathedral, and what long, demure faces even the young ones pulled, in imitation, no doubt, of their elders, and Herbert said ’twould be a charity an one could make ’em laugh.’

‘And I am to be the person destined to accomplish that benevolent object, I perceive,’ said Nash. ‘Well, let us hear what way I am to set about it.’

‘Well, I want you to do penance.’

At this the whole company laughed uproariously, whilst Nash stared at Vezey, who succeeded in keeping up an air of gravity.

‘To do penance!’ exclaimed Nash. ‘In sackcloth and ashes, eh? If that’s all I have to do for the fifty guineas, the money is as good as in my pocket now. So, my dear fellow, be so obliging as to send for all the necessary articles, and I’ll do penance on the spot at once; and may you all profit by my good example. But I don’t exactly see how my penance is to make all the good folk at the cathedral look less austere.’

‘As you are a sinner in public and before all the world, my dear fellow, so must your penance be public,’ replied Vezey, in a tone of rebuke.

‘I might have been sure Robert Vezey

wouldn't part with fifty guineas without a valuable consideration,' said Nash, with a curl of his lip ; 'but pr'ythee, let us hear what this public penance is to be.'

'I propose,' said Vezey, with an assumed air of diffidence, 'that you should stand clothed in a blanket and station yourself presently at the door of the cathedral, so that the people may see you, as they come out from afternoon service. You will so achieve two good objects ; for I'll warrant you'll furnish a little innocent amusement to the people of this city, and you will do penance ; an act which is good for all of us.'

'Now confound you for an impudent knave !' cried out Nash, when he was able to make his voice heard above the laughter of the company. 'D'ye think, because a fellow is short of cash, that he would make himself a laughing-stock for all the bumpkins in York ? Keep your fifty guineas, and don a blanket yourself and do penance ; you need to do it more than I, Master Robert, an all tales be true.'

'Nay, I did not think you would take

my very friendly proposal in such unkind part,' said Vezey ; ' I imagined I should do you a double service, and administer both to your temporal and spiritual necessities. However, consider the matter for a few minutes. I don't retract my offer yet.' And here Vezey quitted the room to fetch his hat, adding, as he did so, that if Nash continued obstinate he would go for a walk on the walls.

' Nash, my dear fellow,' exclaimed Lord Merton, as soon as the door had closed on Vezey, ' why did you not consent to don the blanket ? 'Twould have been only a frolic, and Vezey, I could see, was in agonies after he had made the proposal, lest you should accept it. You know how he loves money. I'faith, he wouldn't have slept for a month, an you had consented to do penance.'

' Egad,' said Nash, slapping his knee with his hand, ' I never thought of that. I'll do it. Come, come, Master Vezey, I shall be even with you now for robbing me of that twenty pounds.'

The mirth excited by this last remark had not died away, when Vezey returned to the room with his hat.

‘Call for a blanket, Bob. I’m your man.

Vezey turned quite pale, as he looked at Nash with an air of blank amazement, and then, suddenly stepping towards the window, he said, with an air of relief :

‘Tis too late now, my dear fellow, I believe the people are leaving the cathedral.’

‘Not they,’ exclaimed Lord Merton ;
‘ ’twill be a good quarter of an hour before they come out, and we can get to the south entrance in three minutes ; pr’ythee, Frazer, call for a blanket.’

Vezey smiled a sickly smile, and tried another tack, expressing apprehensions for Nash’s safety.

‘Twas ill-judged of me to make such a proposal ; Nash may get into serious trouble. Suppose the clergy take offence at the jest !’

‘Hang it, let ’em ; who cares ?’ shouted Nash, who had been refreshing himself

with a large goblet of Rhenish. 'Now then, Thomas, where's the blanket?' he added, as a staid serving man presented himself at the door, in answer to Frazer's vociferous summons.

'A blanket did you say, sir?' asked the man, in a tone of wonderment.

'Ay, a blanket, the biggest you have in the house, and bring a candle; yes, by Jove! I ought to have a candle,—it's the proper thing, I know, when you are doing penance.'

'Vezey didn't bargain for a candle,' said Frazer, slyly; 'perhaps he'll add another twenty pounds to the fifty, an Nash will carry one.'

'You would be mighty obliging, upon my word, Frazer, at another man's expense,' exclaimed Vezey, who could scarce restrain his pent-up wrath.

'I was only showing you how you might supplement your intended good deed,' replied Frazer. 'But here's the blanket; we'll all wait upon you to the cathedral, good Master Penitent.'

And off they set in a body, making Petergate re-echo with their laughter, whilst Nash carried the blanket on his arm, and Vezey brought up the rear in sullen silence.

Arrived at the porch of the south transept, Lord Merton and the other gentlemen mounted the spacious flight of steps and there assisted Nash to don his blanket. The latter then placed himself against the wall, his harsh irregular features according well with the look of severe gloom which he chose to assume.

The strange spectacle soon attracted a few loiterers to the spot, and some amongst them hastened away to spread the tidings. Soon, men, women and children came flocking from all quarters, rushing from Goodram Gate, through Little Alice Lane, past St. William's College, from Gilly Gate and Bootham Bar, from Stonegate and Little Blake Street, and even from the furthest end of Coney Street. Had the congregation been delayed much longer coming out, they would have found the majority of the

population of York crowding and crushing together in the then built-up and confined space before the south entrance, to catch a glimpse of the strange gentleman *doing penance*.

As it was, when the service was over, the congregation leaving the cathedral could get very little further than the door, and the Dean, coming himself to learn the cause of the blockade, found, to his surprise, Nash, whom he had met in company with Lord Merton, standing erect against the wall, grim and solemn, and immovable as a statue, wrapped up in his large blanket. If Vezey had hoped that Nash would get into a scrape, he was disappointed, for the Dean only shook his head, smiled and said :

‘What ! Mr. Nash in masquerade !’

‘Only a Yorkshire penance, Mr. Dean,’ replied Nash, pointing his forefinger at Vezey, who chanced to be standing foremost in the throng of his gay companions ‘for keeping bad company.’

CHAPTER X.

THE "HAMPTON COURT."

THE *Hampton Court*, though only a third-rate man-of war, was a fine vessel of fifty-eight guns, and manned by three hundred and forty brave tars. She was lying off Gravesend one gusty afternoon towards the end of March, when the wind blew keen and cold enough to make the great cabin, or state room on the quarter-deck, a very pleasant and comfortable retreat. Moreover, Captain Hastings was a sprig of the nobility and very much a man of pleasure, so the great cabin was not only comfortably but even luxuriously fitted up. The captain had also his band on board, to the number of ten or a dozen

performers, who on this afternoon had discussed sweet melodies at the door of the great cabin, whilst the gallant and jovial commander entertained some guests to dinner.

He was a genial, kind-hearted young man, this captain of the *Hampton Court*, much beloved by his officers and crew, and a brave fellow, though he did wear peruques and follow all the extravagances of fashion, to the intense disgust of the first lieutenant, Master Hawser, who, nevertheless, was on good and friendly terms with his captain.

An utter contrast these two officers presented as they sat at table: Hastings, with his fair, almost boyish face, his winning smiles, and sparkling blue eyes; Hawser, grim of aspect, and harsh-featured. Their dress, too, was equally dissimilar; the captain being arrayed in rich apparel, with cravat and ruffles of Flanders lace, and a huge peruque with long flowing curls; whilst Hawser wore a plain blue suit of clothes, guarded with a few bars of gold lace, and a scrubby wig, and

carried by his side a large plate-hilted sword.

Captain Hastings' principal guest, on this March afternoon, was Lord Merton, an old friend; and Lord Merton had brought with him Master Richard Nash, student of the Middle Temple, who, being ever fond of novelty and pleasure, was willing enough to make acquaintance with the interior of a man-of-war. Lieutenant Hawser greeted Nash with some surprise and no small pleasure, for being a native of Swansea, he had known his father, and even our hero himself, when the latter was a child. So Nash was installed next to the lieutenant at table, who seemed greatly taken with him, only that he cast sundry glances of contemptuous disapproval upon the young man's gay and foppish attire, for Nash loved finery, as we know, and spread out to view on his person the little gold he had in the most ostentatious manner; and though the gilding was but thin, he laid it on as far as it would go.

Dinner was over, and the dessert was

now on the table ; dishes of almond comfits, and paste of plums, Naples biscuits, and Banbury cakes, pears and apples of various kinds, mingling with flagons of wine of equal variety ; and goblets were filled and refilled with great celerity, whilst the conversation grew noisy and vociferous. The Captain now proposed the health of 'our Deliverer the King,' which was drunk in brimming goblets. The Deliverer himself was gloomy and misanthropic, and was very possibly at that very same hour toasting himself in the banquetting hall at a different Hampton Court, drinking schnaps of Hollands gin, as had become his wont in his solitary hours ; his potations not making him merry and jovial, like these light-hearted seamen, but peevish and irritable, and causing him to vent his discontent upon his foreign menials, whom he would chastise with his cane, so that these unfortunates came to be facetiously designated, in the royal household, the knights of the cane.

After King William's health had been

drunk by the party in bumpers, the healths of the two admirals, Sir Cloudesley Shovel and Sir George Rooke, were next drunk. And an allusion having been made to the extraordinary merit of the former, which had raised him from the humble position of cabin boy to the rank of an admiral, Hastings pledged Nash in a bumper, and wished him all success in his profession, and that he might end with being Lord Chancellor. Nash laughed, and replied that that was not very likely ; that studying for the bar was very uphill work, and that he felt sometimes almost sick of it.

‘My friend Dick Nash is a veritable weathercock,’ cried out Captain Turner, of Lord Dartmouth’s royal regiment of Fusiliers. ‘Egad, I should not wonder now, if he cuts the law next. You must know, Hastings, that he was heretofore a son of Mars, and he and I were often boon companions, but he abandoned that noble profession, all for what, d’ye think ? Why, for the sake of the fair sex.’

‘I suppose, replied Captain Hastings, ‘he

found that regimental duties interfered too much with the devoted attention he wished to bestow upon sweet womankind. But who is the charmer at whose shrine he worships? Let us toast her,' said the captain, with great gallantry.

'I will tell you, Hastings,' interposed Lord Merton, speaking with affected solemnity. 'Twas Jane Roland, the pretty little daughter of the hostess of the Queen's Head at York awhile ago, but she thought he was a reprobate and forsook him, after she saw him doing penance in a blanket at the cathedral door. I know not whether he still wears the willow.'

Lord Merton had now to tell the story of the penance scene at York, which excited great mirth and laughter amongst the company, in which Nash himself joined freely.

When quiet was somewhat restored, Lieutenant Hawser, after a few preliminary hems, by way of clearing his throat, addressed Nash in an admonitory and grave tone of voice.

‘Hark’e, Mr. Nash, I knew your father at Swansea, d’ye see, and you too, when you was no bigger than a Triton’s taffrel. You don’t seem to have much fancy for being a lawyer, and smite my timbers, if I wonder at it. Avast ! avast ! I say to all land sharks. So, hark’e, Mr. Nash, don’t steer by a wrong chart. I’m a thorough seaman, d’ye see, and I have sailed the salt seas and I’ve kept reckoning and boxed my compass for twenty long years, and though I say it, I know a cat from a capstan, d’ye see ; so take my advice, and put about on the other tack, and try a sailor’s life and come along with us. It’s true I’m only a lieutenant, and haven’t been as lucky as many : but that’s neither here nor there, and it don’t signify talking ; patience is a good stream anchor, and I put my trust in heaven, d’ye see, and steer by the compass, and all will come right in the end. Howsomever, Mr. Nash, wherever you are found, I’ll be always glad to grapple your starboard hand, and I wish you may have smooth seas and gentle gales.’

'This lengthy harangue of the lieutenant was received with great cheers, and even boisterous applause, by all the company; nevertheless, as soon as he could make himself heard, Captain Turner exclaimed:

'Forbid it, heaven! that the noble profession of the law should lose so promising a member as Mr. Nash. Do you know, gentlemen, that for his proficiency in matters appertaining to that learned profession, he has already been offered the honour of knighthood by our glorious king and deliverer?'

'Come, Nash, tell us all about it; let's hear,' exclaimed several voices at once.

'Nash is too modest to speak of his own merits,' interposed Captain Turner. 'See, how he blushes. I'll tell you all about it. You must know that last Christmas there was a great revelling held at the Middle Temple, and many of the prime nobility were feasted and entertained. My Lord Merton and I were also invited guests. Our friend Nash, young as he is, was

chosen prince of the revels. Is not that a proof of the high esteem the members of the Inn held him in, as *Arbiter Elegantiarum*, as they said of him? Yet he cries out that he is sick of the law.'

'The ingrate,' exclaimed Lord Merton. 'And what dicing there was! I lost more than I like to think of. Our prince of the revels was lucky, though.'

'And then,' continued Captain Turner, 'there was dancing and music and singing, and the king was entertained with plays, and interludes, and so forth.'

'But the knighthood,' interposed Captain Hastings. 'We want to know about the offer of knighthood!'

'All in good time; I am coming to it presently,' replied Captain Turner. 'Well, then Nash recited some complimentary verses to his majesty, and he did it in such excellent style, that the king was so well pleased with his performance, and the abilities he had shown in conducting the entertainment, that he offered to knight him there and then.'

'And would you believe it?' exclaimed Lord Merton, 'the ingrate declined the honour.'

'His modesty, no doubt,' said Captain Hastings.

'Ay, to be sure,' said Captain Turner. 'See how he blushes at the bare mention of his merits.'

'Egad,' interposed Nash, 'knighthood is rather too expensive an honour for a poor man, so I just said to the king:—"Please, your majesty, if you intend to make me a knight, I beg it may be one of your poor knights of Windsor, and then I shall have a fortune, at least able to support my title."'

'No humbug there; that was plain sailing, d'ye see, and didn't he understand your signals?' asked Lieutenant Hawser.

'And did not his majesty take the hint?' also asked Hastings, but in plainer English.

'Not he, I'll be sworn,' growled Hawser, who was somewhat of a Jacobite; 'he loves money too well.'

‘Come, fill your goblets, gentlemen, to the brim,’ said Captain Hastings: ‘away with all such sordid subjects as money; let us toast the ladies; ’tis a toast that Master Nash will drink with all his heart.’

And the company did all fill their goblets, and they gaily emptied them. ‘Come, Hawser,’ said the gallant captain of the *Hampton Court*, with a merry twinkle in his eye, ‘you, too, are a devoted admirer of the fair sex; let us have your favourite song, “To all the ladies now on land.”’

The lieutenant was at first rather shy before the strangers, and pleaded inability, loss of voice, and so forth, but after some pressing by the captain and the rest of the company, he cleared his throat and begun :

“To all ye ladies now on land,
We men at sea indite,
But first would have you understand
How hard it is to write;
The Muses now, and Neptune too,
We must implore to write to you.
With a fa, la, la, la, la.”’

The sentimental air which the hard-featured lieutenant had assumed, the soft tone in which he uttered the 'fa, la, la,' his turned-up eyes, and his hand placed over his heart, were so eminently ludicrous, that peals of laughter drowned for a time his voice; and such was the merriment amongst the guests that Captain Hastings allowed him to finish the whole of the lengthy ditty. But on other occasions, when the gallant captain was in a merry mood and called for the lieutenant's song, as he generally grew weary of its length before it came to an end, he always contrived to find some expedient by which to cut it short.

After the lieutenant's song was finished, the gentlemen filled and re-filled their goblets so many times, and pledged each other in so many toasts, that two or three succumbed to the power of Bacchus, and then lusty sailors were called in, who, with their usual 'ay, ay, sir,' in answer to the captain's orders, hoisted up the insensible forms of the vanquished, and bore them off.

Nash might have kept his seat to the last, but unfortunately for him, Captain Hastings desired the servant to tell the steward to send in some bowls of punch and bombo.

‘Bombo!’ exclaimed the lieutenant, who was particularly fond of that potation. You must taste our bombo, Mr. Nash, the steward mixes it first-rate.’

‘What is bombo?’ inquired Nash.

‘Bombo, d’ye see, it’s rare stuff to finish a long day’s reckoning. You’ll like it, I’ll warrant. It is rum, water, sugar, and nutmeg, all nicely mixed up together, d’ye see, as our steward mixes it.’

Nash tasted it, and decidedly approved of it; but, alas! a goblet of the alluring potation caused him also to fall ignominiously under the table.

A couple of sailors were again summoned, and again they repeated their ‘ay, ay, sir,’ and the fallen hero was raised from the floor amidst the laughter of the rest of the company, and carried off to Lieutenant Hawser’s cabin.

There he slept heavily for hours, and was sleeping still when the captain's barge was manned, in the small hours of the night, to carry the visitors to shore, and when Lord Merton vainly attempted to arouse him to consciousness.

Suddenly, Captain Hastings made a proposal to Lord Merton and the other guests, which was received with peals of laughter. What that proposal was, we shall see in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XI.

AT SEA.

MASTER RICHARD NASH, though living at a time when deep drinking was in fashion, was usually a very temperate and sober man; but when he did depart from his rule, and indulge in any excess, he was sure to suffer so much afterwards as to make him the more determined to practise rigid abstinence for the future.

Never had Nash had so sad an awakening as that which followed the revel on board the *Hampton Court*; nay, for some time he refused to believe that he was awake at all, but fancied himself the victim of some baleful nightmare, or a prey to the delirium of fever. For a few moments he could not

recollect where he was, and he closed his eyes that he might reflect more calmly ; but he was suddenly roused into broad wakefulness by 'a succession of deafening sounds, a loud hoarse voice, shouting, 'Starboard watch, ahoy,' and then a trampling of many feet, and a peculiarly discordant grating noise overhead, as though a score of scrubbing brushes were hard at work.

Poor Nash ! every nerve in his aching forehead seemed to quiver and shoot with fresh pain, as though in resentment of this barbarous noise ; and then he stared wildly about him, and groaned out :

'That horrid bombo ! my head swims still ; I must be dizzy, for sure ; by Jove, the bed moves !'

He lay still for a moment, and then, venturing to raise himself up a little, gazed around him in utter bewilderment and dismay, while he exclaimed, half aloud, as Galileo said of the earth, 'Yes, it moves.'

And as he spoke, he swung as though in mid-air, in his novel bed—a mattress placed

in a long narrow sort of bag, and furnished with blankets and sheets.

‘Egad!’ exclaimed our hero, letting himself sink down, for a sudden lurch of the ship brought his nose unpleasantly close to the beams that traversed the ceiling of the cabin, ‘this must be what those sailor fellows call a hammock.’

After awhile, he again raised himself up and looked around him. A faint light, struggling with the semi-darkness of the cabin, stole in at a little window on his right hand, and through the dim and murky glass he saw only water, as far as his eye could reach, whilst again the vigorous scrubbing overhead made his temples throb, and the movement of the ship and the rippling of the water against its sides caused poor Nash to succumb to another most potent and distressing feeling, and he sank back, white as the sheets, and groaning, in his hammock.

Once he essayed to let himself down from his swinging bed, but as he nearly tumbled out head first he gave up the

attempt in despair. Then the scrubbing was renewed with double vigour, and our hero shook his fist in impotent wrath at the rafters overhead, turned painfully on his side, groaned, and lay looking the image of despair, till he was aroused by steps outside the cabin door, a rough voice repeating the monotonous, 'ay, ay, sir,' as though in answer to some order or command, and finally, the opening of the door and the entrance of Lieutenant Hawser.

Here, at least, was some one to quarrel with, a consummation which, in his present savage state of mind, Nash most ardently desired, and he was not even propitiated by Hawser's rough but hearty greeting.

'What cheer, Mr. Nash, what cheer? How lies the land?'

'Land, did you say,' repeated Nash, in a tone of indignation, and jerking his thumb towards the cabin window; 'I call it water, and the sooner I am put on land the better I shall like it. I feel mighty uncomfortable, sir, and ill altogether; I am half dead.'

And here our poor hero's tone changed

from anger to despair, as the vessel, giving a lurch forward, caused him to look more ghastly than ever.

‘Don’t be chicken-hearted, my dear lad, I’ll cruise up to the steward’s room and send you some junk or salt pork and a bowl of bombo.’

The prostrate Nash turned more deadly pale, if possible. than before, and his stomach heaved again at the very names of pork and bombo, and with a faint voice he exclaimed :

‘The devil take your bombo ! I’ve been poisoned with it. I shall die, I am sure.’

‘Hark’e, mate, don’t veer out such a deal of jaw. Put your trust in heaven, and Davy Jones will sheer off.’

Here the scrubbing and grating noise overhead was redoubled.

‘What is that infernal noise ? My poor head will split,’ said the sea-sick man, pressing his hands to his temples.

‘It’s only the watch holy-stoning the deck,’ replied the lieutenant, with a grin.

A roll of the vessel, at this moment,

caused the hammock in which our sick hero lay to swing on one side.

‘In the name of heaven, how did you manage to get me into this horrible sack last night?’ asked Nash pettishly.

‘Avast ! shipmate, avast !’ replied Hawser, tartly ; ‘look ye here, sir, look ye here, this here hammock is as good a hammock as e’er was swung, though I say it, d’ye see ?’

‘May be it is ; but I wonder how I have slept in it all night without tumbling headlong out of it, and breaking my neck or my skull,’ replied Nash gloomily.

‘I’ll warrant you safe, Mr. Nash ; and if you’ve any psalms to sing, you may veer out a stave or two,’ said Hawser with a leer.

‘But where are we, sir ? What are you all doing ?’ asked our hero, impatiently. ‘The ship is sailing : that I perceive ; and unless you want to drive me stark mad, tell me, at once, where Lord Merton and my friends are.’

‘Come, come, hark’e, Mr. Nash, cheer up and turn out of that there berth, and

clap on all your canvas and come aloft on deck, and then we can fall a-jawing, and I'll answer all your questions. Come, grapple my shoulders, d'ye see, and I'll help you out of your berth and take you in tow till we get up aloft. The fresh air will comfort your stomach, d'ye see.'

Nash assented to this proposal with an air of resigned despair, descended, with Hawser's assistance, from the hammock, put on his coat, for that was the only article of attire his companions had removed on the previous evening, and then accompanied the lieutenant to the quarter-deck, where Captain Hastings, busy issuing various orders, waved his hand gracefully to him from the distance, whilst Nash, wan and pale and staggering, caught hold of a rope to support his failing knees.

Our hero had now an opportunity of witnessing the operation, the noise of which had been so distressing to his nerves, when he lay in the hammock in Hawser's cabin. Here were a number of jolly tars, without shoes or stockings, and with their breeches

turned up, kneeling on the wet deck, over which a gravelly sort of sand was strewn, and rubbing the boards with a stone as deftly as any maid scouring a floor.

‘D’ye see, brother,’ said Hawser, with a grin at Nash, who would have put his fingers into his ears if he had dared let go of the friendly rope that supported him, ‘those lads are at their prayers.’

‘That’s holy-stoning, is it?’ growled our injured hero. ‘Well, having heard it once, I never want to hear it again. An I hear anything, indeed, after this din, I shall be surprised, for the drums of my ears are well nigh split.’

‘It don’t signify palavering, Mr. Nash, it’s set down in the log-book of fate, d’ye see? and you’ll be like to hear it many times more,’ replied Hawser, with a chuckle.

Nash did not appear to notice this remark; he was gazing, in fact, in bewildered astonishment at the fast receding land, which was nearly out of sight.

‘Mr. Hawser,’ he suddenly cried out, letting go of the rope and seizing the lieu-

tenant's arm with a frantic grip, 'in the name of heaven, what does this mean? where's Gravesend? I must have a boat to land me at once.'

'Gravesend, did you say?' replied Hawser, after a hearty fit of laughter, for which Nash could have slain him; 'well, it is somewhere in that direction, but smite my taffrel, t'would be a mighty stiff pull for a boat to get there, seeing as how we are now sailing past the Downs. You see, Mr. Nash,' he added, in a would-be soothing tone, 'you was sound asleep last night, and we wouldn't disturb you.'

'And so Captain Hastings sailed without sending me on shore first!' exclaimed Nash, breathless with indignation.

'Well, you see, sir, orders must be obeyed,' replied Hawser.

'Of all the base, dastardly attempts at kidnapping,' cried out Nash, in a tone of fury, 'this beats 'em; I have been infernally bitten, sir, but I'll not put up with it, sir, I'll——' And here our hero made a step forward, seeing Captain Hastings a few yards

off, to tell him, to his face, what he thought of his conduct, when, having quitted his hold of Hawser, he measured his length on the deck the next instant, to the ill-concealed merriment of the sailors. At a signal from the lieutenant, two of them stepped forward, and answering with the everlasting 'Ay, ay, sir,' hastened to hoist up the prostrate form of our sea-sick hero.

'Why did you slip your cable, and go for to part company with me?' remonstrated Hawser. 'You see, shipmate, you shouldn't run ahead in that fashion. You can't keep your legs, no more than a babby.'

At this moment the boatswain laid hold of the silver whistle that hung by a chain from a button hole of his jacket, and putting it to his mouth, gave a whistle that pierced through Nash's aching head.

'Gone now, irrevocably!' he exclaimed in a tone of gloomy despair, and placing his hands to his ears; 'whatever small sense of hearing survived the fiendish din of your holy-stoning.'

‘It’s eight bells now, and that’s only the boatswain piping to breakfast,’ said Hawser, as the men tramped off in a very orderly fashion.

Nash made no answer for a moment or two, and then, spite of his assertion that his hearing was irrevocably gone, again demanded of Hawser where Lord Merton and the others were, and whither the ship was bound, adding, as a wind-up to his remarks, that as he felt sure this abominable trick would be the cause of his death, he should at least like to know in the depths of what ocean his bones would bleach.

‘Avast, brother, avast ; you’ve got into the high latitudes, d’ye see, and I can’t keep you in tow,’ replied the lieutenant, very composedly.

‘Where are we going, and where are my friends ?’ reiterated Nash, in a tone of mournful endurance. ‘Can you inform me of that, Mr. Hawser, in terms and language which may be intelligible to a landsman ?’

‘Well, Mr. Nash, what’s the use of

palavering? Your friends all slipped their cables and parted company with us last night; and where are we bound, d'ye ask? I must tell you first that it was all along of the captain's kindness as made him bring you with us.'

'Oh, hang his kindness,' growled Nash.

'We thought,' continued Hawser, not noticing the angry expletive, 'that as you didn't like the lawyers—who likes them landsharks?—and as how you're no chicken-hearted lubber, that maybe a bit of a cruise might be more to yer mind.'

'You might have asked me, first,' said our hero savagely.

'But you see you was asleep,' replied Hawser; 'then Captain Hastings thought as we were only going to be Channel groppers, and so 'twould be a nice opportunity for you to see how you liked the life of a salt, without going far from Old England.'

'Channel groppers!' echoed Nash, in a tone of angry inquiry. 'What the hangment do you mean by Channel groppers?'

And how does your being only Channel gropers affect me? What have I to do with it?

‘Why, d’ye see, ’tis a name they give the Channel fleet in war time,’ replied Hawser, ‘which has to watch about the sea ports of Mounseer, when the wind is fair for him to come out; and when it blows too strong into his harbours for to do so, then, d’ye see, our fleet will put into Cawsand or Torbay, or some such fresh beef station, as we sailors say. It’s not what most salts like, d’ye see, to be Channel groping, and always running in and out of harbour, and tacking hither and thither, though one might chance to fall in with a privateer, or such-like, creeping out in hazy weather or dark nights; no, no, Mr. Nash, it’s none but your scurvy shambling half-timbered dog of a sailor as likes Channel groping, d’ye see; one might as well be at home by his mother’s fireside, and tied to her apron strings; a thoroughbred seaman, as knows a card from a compass, d’ye see, has fine feelings and hates

ridicule, and when the girls and sailors from foreign stations tell him he'll never have the scurvy on a fresh beef station, adzooks ! he can't stand that. But there's, no fear——'

Nash listened impatiently to this long harangue of the lieutenant, and at length interrupted him by asking angrily :

'Permit me, sir, again to ask what have I to do with Channel gropers ? how does Channel groping affect me ? Be so good as to satisfy me.'

'Adzooks ! Mr. Nash, I see you know how to bring a man to his bearings. You'll not have much to do with Channel gropers. We never had no fear the *Hampton Court* would be a Channel groper for long, with Captain Hastings in command of her.'

'Well, what then ?' asked Nash, curtly.

'You see,' replied Hawser, with a smirk on his hard face, 'our captain, though he be a fop, is as brave a fellow as ever trod a quarter-deck ; he's a thorough seaman, he knows a cat from a capstan, I'll warrant ye ; he's no weak, chicken-hearted lubber,

d'ye see, and he has no liking for apron-string stations ; so though he was sorry for you, Mr. Nash,' continued the lieutenant, in a tone of affected commiseration, 'when he opened his orders as we got out to sea, he was glad for himself and for all of us when he found that we were to sail for the Mediterranean. So——'

'Sail to the Mediterranean?' repeated Nash, in the greatest amazement. 'You really don't mean to tell me you are taking me to the Mediterranean! It's most villainous kidnapping, an infamous act of kidnapping. I say! I'll have redress. I'll have my *habeas corpus*; most scandalous kidnapping!'

'Belay there, belay. Hark'e, brother, an we fall a-jawing, I can pump up as much bilge water as another,' said Hawser tartly; but immediately he added, in a more soothing tone: 'Come, cheer up, Mr. Nash; put your trust in heaven, keep a good reckoning and steer by the compass, and don't be chicken-hearted, and you'll like the cruise well, I'll warrant ye; and may be,' he added, by way of encourage-

ment, 'you'll have a chance of a shot at some herring-faced son of a sea-calf of a Mounseer.'

'Or he'll get a chance of a shot at me,' replied Nash, ironically.

'We just takes our chances, d'ye see,' replied Hawser, very composedly. 'And if so be that it be set down in the log-book of fate that a chain-shot carries off one of your legs, d'ye see, well, you would lose it for old England; so cheer up, Mr. Nash, and, as I have just said, steer by the compass, and put your trust in Heaven, brother, and if so be as how you should lose a leg, well, brother, don't value it no more nor a piece of old junk or pork flesh.'

Here Nash cast a rueful look at his legs, of which he was not a little vain, while the imperturbable Hawser finished his admonition, saying:

'So you see, anyhow, my dear lad, you've nothing to complain about.'

CHAPTER XII.

TESTAMENTARY.

SINCE that eventful day, when Master Richard Nash, student of law in the Middle Temple, had accompanied Lord Merton, as his shadow, to dine with Captain Hastings on board the *Hampton Court*, brilliant feats of arms, redounding to the glory of old England, had been achieved by her brave sons. Admirals Sir Cloudesley Shovel and Sir George Rooke had stormed the almost impregnable fortress of Gibraltar and compelled the governor to capitulate—impregnable they might truly deem it—for after inspecting its fortifications, the English commanders were amazed at the

success of their attempt, and affirmed that it might have been held by fifty men against an army.

One morning, in the early part of August, Anno Domini 1704, about twelve o'clock, or eight bells, in nautical parlance, an unusual stir was visible on the deck of the *Hampton Court*. The crew had dined, and the fifer had played a lively tune while the grog was being served out. But on this occasion, instead of the usual allowance of one gill of rum and three of water, every man's share had been doubled. The reason why this indulgence was granted we shall presently explain; but to judge by the radiant countenances of these jolly tars, some highly gratifying entertainment was about to take place.

The ship was sailing before a gentle breeze, and one of the officers on deck was occupied in seeing the log-line run out, to ascertain how many knots she went an hour. To judge of the beaming expression on Captain Hastings' face, he was well satisfied with his officer's report of the ship's progress.

‘We shall be alongside her soon after the two bells,’ remarked the captain, to the officers standing near him, with a look of rapture as great as though he had been going to meet some beloved charmer of the female sex.

But no fair lady was in question this time, and the preparations on deck were grimly suggestive of what was to come.

From daybreak there had been a thick fog, so that little could be seen beyond the ship’s bows, save those volumes of white mist, and the waves that beat softly against the sides of the vessel; but when the fog cleared off, loud and strong from the top-mast-head was heard the voice of the man stationed there, announcing ‘A sail on the larboard bow.’

Immediately, captain and officers had levelled their glasses in that direction, and a ship in full sail had been sighted about four or five miles off.

Captain Hastings had at once issued orders to give chase. The *Hampton Court* gained perceptibly on the strange ship,

and when the atmosphere cleared, and the sun shone brilliantly on the white decks of the English vessel, and on the spreading sails of the stranger, it became evident that the latter was doing her best to get away.

After an exciting chase of a couple of hours, the officers of the *Hampton Court* had been enabled to make out that the flying ship was a Frenchman, and appeared to carry the same weight of guns as themselves.

Orders were immediately given by Captain Hastings to clear the deck for action, and forthwith all was stir and bustle. Sailors tramping up and down, carpenters knocking away divisions of captain's and officers' cabins, and sails brought up for the wounded to be placed upon, that they might be taken down to the cockpit to have their wounds dressed.

And where was that injured individual, Mr. Richard Nash, who had been most villainously kidnapped—deucedly bitten, to use his own words? Why, he was on deck in animated conversation with Lieu-

tenant Hawser, and apparently as gay-hearted and gallant as any of the brave tars around him.

He had soon recovered from his first emotions of wrath, and in a very few days appeared quite at home on board the *Hampton Court*, and in a mood to enjoy anything and everything, not excepting an encounter with the enemy. He could now walk the deck without grappling Lieutenant Hawser's shoulder, and could drink bombo without any unpleasant results ; he could rap out round sea oaths, and, to quote the lieutenant, he now knew a cat from a capstan and a card from a compass, and being also of a philosophic turn of mind, our hero had quite coincided with Hawser's wise saying, that this cruise had been set down for him in the log-book of fate.

And, indeed, not infrequently had all the philosophy of the whilom student of the Middle Temple been put to the test. The *Hampton Court* had joined a blockading squadron off Toulon, about which harbour she had been hovering for eighteen months,

during which time the weary patience, not of Nash only, for he was a landsman, but of all the ship's company, became exhausted by the never-ending tacking and wearing ship, according to the changes of the wind. Certainly, occasional and trifling variations to the monotony of the scene, while on the station, were afforded when an opportunity was offered to the ship to fire at and bring to some fishing boat, and thereby obtain a fresh meal, not only of fish, but of fowls and eggs, and sometimes even the luxury of grapes ; for Captain Hastings had ever an eye to the comforts of his crew.

The *Hampton Court* was at the present time cruising about the coast of Spain and the island of Majorca.

'Now, d'ye see, brother,' cried out Lieutenant Hawser, in a tone of exultation, and slapping Nash on the back, 'you may have a chance of a shot at a Mounseer, as I told you, many a time.'

'Or he may have a chance of a shot at me, as I told you,' replied Nash, laughing. 'But all I hope is, that an I am to be shot,

'twill not be in the leg; 'twould be a barbarous misadventure, an I were never able to walk a minuet again, for I love dancing.'

'Tis a lubberly pastime for a man, d'ye see,' observed Hawser gruffly, and casting a somewhat contemptuous glance on Nash, who was surveying his legs with an air of tender admiration. 'But never mind, brother, put your trust in heaven; all's fair, whatever happens in war, whether you lose your leg or Mounseer loses his. Now,' he added, with a grin, and pointing to a little group standing and looking over the bow of the ship towards the enemy, 'd'ye see those half-timbered dogs; I must send all that lumber below.'

'Lumber,' repeated Nash, in an inquiring tone.

'Ay, lumber,' replied the lieutenant. 'Adzooks! what good are the doctors, the parson, the purser, and the lob-lolly men on deck? Let 'em get below and look out the medicine chests and bandages. standing there, staring, and idling! and

be hanged to them, for lubberly lumber, I say.'

'Save us! Mr. Hawser, what a reprobate you are!' exclaimed Nash, laughing. 'What shocking disrespect to the cloth, to call the parson lumber.'

Hawser took no notice of this reproof, but having vented his spleen on the lumber, now stood gazing, with a smile of pleasure, at the jolly tars on deck, whose countenances seemed to glow with pride and exultation as they drew near the enemy, who had now commenced firing at them.

'With the help of wind and weather, our lads would engage a three-decker,' chuckled the lieutenant.

'Never mind her firing,' shouted Captain Hastings. 'Don't fire yet, my lads; we shall want all our shot when we come alongside her. Don't fire till we get close in with her; I'll give you the signal.'

'Hark'e, Mr. Nash,' said the lieutenant, in a solemn tone, 'it may be as how it's put down in the log-book of fate that I am to box my compass no longer, and that one of

that d—— Frenchman's bullets will send me with flowing canvas to Davy Jones, d'ye see ; so let me grapple your starboard hand : you're my countryman and my ship-mate ; and hark'ee, I can spy foul weather before it comes, but I trust in heaven, d'ye see, and if so be as I am to slip my cable to-day, well, it don't signify talking, ship-mate, but do you take all my goods and chattels, and if that French spawn of old Beelzebub knocks your head off, why, I'll take yours.'

' This is your last will and testament, or, I should call it, our mutual will and testament,' said Nash, in a jocular tone ; ' very well, but I hope you won't slip your cable, nor I lose my head, or my legs.'

Here a carronade, fired from the quarter-deck, by order of Captain Hastings, as a signal to his men to pour a broadside into the enemy, alongside of whom they were just now coming, stayed any more testamentary injunctions on the part of the worthy lieutenant.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE SURVIVING LEGATEE.

THE *Redoubtable*, for that was the name of the French ship, and the *Hampton Court* had been engaged for an hour and a half, within pistol-shot, pouring heavy and incessant broadsides into each other, when at length they dropped alongside one another, laying head and stern together, and the fluke of the spare anchor of the *Hampton Court* having hooked the quarter of the French ship, they became so close, fore and aft, that the muzzles of their guns almost touched each other's sides. In this position the engagement became most furious, and for several minutes the two vessels appeared to be enveloped in flame,

pouring deafening broadsides into each other, when during a momentary lull in the firing and noise, the enemy was heard calling out loudly for quarter. Captain Hastings at once put his speaking trumpet to his mouth, and demanded to know if they wanted quarter and if they had struck. Receiving no answer, he repeated the question twice or thrice, and then shouted for the boarders, ordering them to board.

The order was received with eager alacrity, and a swarm of brave Jack Tars followed in the wake of Lieutenant Hawser as, sword in hand, he led the way, shouting, 'Come on, my lads ; hurrah for old England !'

Bravely was the enemy's vessel boarded, but so soon as the gallant assailants sprang on board the *Redoubtable* : they discovered the *ruse* that had been played.

A far superior force of the Frenchmen lay under cover with sabres in their hands, ready to receive them. The boarders at once effected their retreat, and so soon as

they had returned to the *Hampton Court*, she poured a heavy broadside into the enemy.

The French ship having in the meanwhile disengaged her quarter from the anchor of the *Hampton Court*, poured a parting broadside into her foe, and taking advantage of a light breeze just then rising, spread all her canvas and prepared to sheer off. Notwithstanding that many of the braces and a great part of the running rigging of the *Hampton Court* were shot away, together with the main and mizen top-sail sheets, Captain Hastings gave orders to pursue, but at that moment it was found that his vessel had been struck by a ball between wind and water, which had made so dangerous a hole, that he was forced to lay by till it was plugged. Thus the Frenchman escaped.

Bravely and unflinchingly and perfectly self-possessed had Nash remained on the deck of the *Hampton Court*, during all the engagement, half blinded though he was by smoke, and deafened by the roar of

the guns, whilst grape as well as canister, with single and double-headed shot, whistled about his ears. He saw wounded men carried down to the doctors in the cock-pit, and other poor fellows killed close by him where he stood, whilst, more ghastly sight still, the bodies of those who had died under the surgeons' hands were brought up from the cock-pit and thrown overboard, or unceremoniously shoved into the sea through one or other of the port holes. All these scenes of horror he witnessed undismayed, displaying no more concern for self than he had on that sultry August afternoon, when wandering in Hyde Park, Callender, the starving author, pistol in hand, had rushed upon him, bidding him 'stand and deliver.'

When Nash had heard the order given to board, and watched his friend Hawser gallantly heading the boarding party, he made a step forward, as though he would have joined him ; then, suddenly checking himself, and surveying the lofty sides of the *Redoubtable*, he muttered half aloud :

‘Pr’ythee stop, Richard Nash ; thou art not a monkey, man, that can swing thy carcase from ship to ship like Hawser and those fellows.’

But all further hesitation in our hero’s mind as to what he should do was decided for him the next moment.

He suddenly became aware of a slight numbness in the left leg, and simultaneously with this sensation, his ears were startled by the following announcement from a young midshipman standing near :

‘You are wounded, sir ; you had better go down to the doctors in the cock-pit.’

‘Fiddle-sticks !’ exclaimed Nash, who was not aware that he was wounded.

The midshipman made no further remark, but simply pointed to our hero’s leg ; and the latter, glancing downwards, was somewhat astonished to see blood oozing freely through his stocking. A stray grape shot had struck him, and the wound, unperceived at the first moment, now began to make itself felt, for when Nash prepared to follow the midshipman’s advice, he found

that he could not walk, and he was forced to beg the assistance of a sailor to lead him down to the cock-pit.

‘Well, Mr. Nash, how are you?’ asked Captain Hastings, on the morning after the engagement, as he entered Lieutenant Hawser’s cabin, which our hero had shared with his father’s old friend, from the time of his first arrival on board the vessel.

‘Bad enough,’ groaned Nash, who, though brave in action, was despondent enough when in the doctor’s hands. ‘I haven’t slept a wink all night.’

‘Oh, the surgeon says you’ll soon be all right again,’ replied Captain Hastings, in a consolatory tone, though he could scarce help smiling at his friend’s lugubrious countenance; ‘you must keep quiet, and if we ward off fever, we shall have you drinking bombo again in no time.’

‘Maybe,’ replied Nash, with a grunt; ‘but I feel mighty uneasy at present. I hope,’ and he groaned deeply, ‘that those confounded doctors will not take off my leg. I wonder how that poor fellow who

had both his calves shot off is doing ? ' Poor fellow ! ' continued Nash, again groaning deeply ; ' he was brought down into the cock-pit just after me.'

' Poor fellow ! ' said Captain Hastings ; ' he was one of my best seamen. His name was Jerry Dobbs.'

' We had both of us to wait a deuced long time before the doctors would attend to us,' remarked Nash, in a bitter tone.

' Order is requisite there, Mr. Nash,' replied Captain Hastings ; ' the doctors must dress every wounded man in rotation, as he is brought down to them.'

' And in the meanwhile some who might have lived if they had had timely help, bleed to death.'

' It is impossible to avoid that mischance,' sighed the captain.

' As I was not so badly wounded, I gave up my turn to poor Jerry,' said Nash. ' I saw the doctors take off one of the poor fellow's legs, and he never uttered a syllable ; but when they told him that they must take off the other, he begged

hard to have it saved. Egad !' and here Nash could hardly restrain a smile, 'and for what reason do you think he begged so hard to have it saved ?'

'Poor fellow !' said Captain Hastings. 'Well, what ?'

'I' faith, he said that he had just bought a new pair of shoes, and he wanted one leg to be left just that he might wear them out.'

Captain Hastings smiled as he observed, 'Well, Mr. Nash, I am glad to tell you that the poor fellow is doing very satisfactorily. I saw him this morning.'

'But I do not want to do very satisfactorily with the loss of a leg,' groaned Nash. 'Where is Hawser ?' he asked abruptly, glancing, as he spoke, at the lieutenant's vacant hammock.

It was the captain's turn now to look grave and sorrowful, for spite of all the discrepancy in their age, worldly fortune, and dispositions, the gay and brilliant young captain felt a real esteem and friendship for his old gruff, weather-beaten first lieutenant, and a strong sense of the

pathetic, mingled with the ludicrous, passed over him, as his eye fell on Hawser's old scratch wig, hung on a peg, and surmounting a shabby blue coat, much worn and frayed.

‘Poor fellow! he is safe in Davy Jones’s locker, to use his own words,’ replied Captain Hastings, his bright blue eyes dimmed, as he spoke, with an unwonted moisture. ‘Poor Hawser! as he jumped on board the Frenchman, one of our men saw him run through the body with a pike, and another saw those rascally Frenchmen throw him overboard.’

‘Poor Jack Hawser!’ sighed Nash, when he had recovered from the emotion which had for a few moments overpowered him on hearing this account of his friend’s death. ‘Well, I suppose it was all written down in the log-book of fate, as he was wont to say himself: by-the-bye, at our last conversation, yesterday, just before the engagement, he made me his sole legatee and I made him mine, in the event of the death of either of us.’

‘Indeed,’ said Captain Hastings. Then, with a sly smile, as he glanced at the old scratch wig and the threadbare coat, he added, ‘Shall you don our poor friend’s fashionable suit and peruke?’

‘I’ faith, no,’ replied Nash; ‘I admired my friend vastly, but not his attire.’

The captain smiled, and then said rather abruptly :

‘I am going to Gibraltar to refit, and if you like, Nash, when we get there, you can go on board one of Sir George Rooke’s ships; he has put in there also to refit, after the recent action with the French off Malaga, and he will sail shortly for England. I dare say you’ll have had enough of cruising by this time, and will be glad to return home again.’

‘Aye, but suppose I return short of a leg?’ said Nash, in a rueful tone.

Captain Hastings laughed, and replied that there was no likelihood of any such mischance. ‘And,’ continued the gallant captain, ‘though I shall have to remain in the Mediterranean, as I shall have to join

the squadron of Sir John Leake, yet I hope to return eventually safe to England, when I shall expect to meet you in the gay world of fashion, walking a minuet with your accustomed grace and elegance.'

CHAPTER XIV.

CHARMING AWAY THE POISON.

WE left our hero lying wounded and despondent in his hammock on board the *Hampton Court*, and when we introduce him again to our readers, he is once more in the Metropolis, happily with both legs intact, and quite able to walk a minuet with his accustomed grace and elegance.

He had disposed of the small patrimony he had inherited at his father's death, and had resumed all his old habits, dining poorly on a banquet served cold from a cook-shop, and dressing in a rich apparel at six o'clock for a side box at a theatre. He lived, no one well knew how, spending more in chair hire than in housekeeping,

and his wants were, as in former times, known only to his laundress and his tradesmen ; his fine clothes, however, were known to half the nobility.

In this manner Nash was now spending his time about town, his genteel appearance, his constant civility, and still more his assiduity, gaining him the acquaintance of several persons qualified to lead the fashion both by birth and fortune. He knew that to gain the friendship of the young nobility little more was requisite than obsequious attention and fine clothes ; and as dress has a mechanical influence on the mind, he was careful at every assembly he attended to appear fashionably dressed, added to which, he always made what is called good company, assurance or self-confidence giving him an air of complete ease and elegance.

Nash was at this time thirty years of age, without fortune and without any profession or useful occupation whereby to acquire one.

Poverty, which had pursued him from

his boyhood, dogged his heels now ; and, finding no means to gratify the love of gaiety and pleasure which formed a part of his nature, he became a professed gamester, experiencing, from day to day, vicissitudes of rapture and anguish in proportion to the fluctuations of fortune.

London was at this time the only place where folly and pleasure could be indulged in to the full, and hither came adventurers and sharpers from every part of the country to ply their nefarious occupations during the winter months. Bath, Tunbridge, Scarborough, and such like places, were then only frequented by persons who went to them with the sole purpose of re-establishing their health. As for people of fashion, they had, at that time, no pleasant place of retreat from town for summer, and were compelled to spend that season isolated in the country, in company with booby, fox-hunting squires, attornies, parsons, and parsons' wives, and thus they were deprived of the enjoyment of visiting each other, and winning each other's money.

The healthy do not, from taste, follow the sick and live amongst those whose ailments bring gloom and melancholy in their train, and make them eschew gaiety ; but the visit of Queen Anne to Bath in 1703, for her health, caused that city to be frequented by people of fashion even before Nash made his advent there, and consequently gamesters discovered it to be a proper place of retreat.

The amusements of Bath, however, in those early days of its first notoriety were rude enough. The company were sufficient, certainly, to form a country dance on the bowling-green, but the band numbered only two strong—a fiddle and a hautboy. Smoking met with no prohibition in the public rooms, and country squires talked as loud as if they were in the hunting-field, and swore louder, whilst they strutted and sometimes staggered about, booted and spurred. The ladies, on their part, were not blameless, for their dress was, at times, far from being unexceptional for genteel company, whilst dancing was often kept

up to unreasonable hours, if the company liked each other, and perfect decorum was not always the rule. Then, with regard to cards and play, if anyone lost largely—a matter of frequent occurrence—he would insist, with round oaths, on continuing the game till the luck should turn. As for the dining-rooms, they were in a wretched condition, the floors dirty and the general furniture sordid and mean ; the pump-house was without any director or pumper, as that official was called, and the chairmen, lounging about its entrance, permitted no gentlemen or ladies to walk home by night without insulting them. Such was primitive Bath.

At length Richard Nash bade adieu to London and the Middle Temple and the law, a study quite uncongenial to his tastes, and accompanied some friends to Bath. When he first arrived there, the bowling-green was one of the few places of amusement provided for the company staying in the town, where the music, or rather noise, provided for their entertainment, was fur-

nished, as we have already said, by only two performers. Some of the company would prefer entering an adjacent booth to drink tea and chocolate, and game, for there were then few laws against gaming, and the gaming-table was the constant resort as well of the needy adventurer as of the man of opulence.

It was on a bright May morning that there issued from this booth of sorry appearance a group of fashionably dressed gentlemen ; these were one old acquaintance of ours, Lord Merton, by whom Nash had been, to use his own words, so confoundedly bitten on board the *Hampton Court*, together with Lord Bassett, Sir John Gleek, Sir Harry Hazard and lastly Richard Nash himself. They were all talking loud, and apparently in high spirits, especially the latter gentleman, for he had just won a large sum at primero. Gaming, indeed, had first introduced Nash into the circle of the *beau monde*, and his genteel address, vivacity, joined to some humour, and a

fair share of wit, enabled him to retain the position he had gained.

‘Oh, oh,’ said Nash, stepping forward, with a comical smile on his face, as he perceived the Mayor of Bath advancing to salute Lord Merton, ‘so the great Doctor Malevolus intends the ruin of your city, Mr. Mayor, and, egad, he thinks he can accomplish it. I hear that he has said he will cast a toad into your waters.’

Here there was a general laugh from Nash’s friends.

‘Ah, gentlemen,’ replied the mayor, with a rueful look, ‘’tis no laughing matter for us. Doctor Malevolus is one of the greatest physicians of the age, and out of vexation at some affront which he thinks has been put upon him here, he threatens to write a pamphlet against the efficacy of the Bath waters. If he does, the city will be ruined, I assure you, gentlemen.’

‘Pooh, pooh,’ said Nash, laughing still louder, ‘’tis, hard if we can’t outwit Dr. Malevolus, though he is one of the greatest

doctors of the age. I'll tell you what, Mr. Mayor, I'll charm away the poison of the great doctor's toad, as they usually charm the venom of the tarantala.'

The mayor looked puzzled, and glanced inquiringly at Nash.

'By music, sir,' replied the latter.

CHAPTER XV.

THE KING OF BATH.

GAY voices and laughter, the strains of lively music, and the splash of falling water, mingled together in the Pump Room at Bath one bright September morning, when the chimes of the Abbey had just struck the hour of nine. Rather an early hour, too, for so distinguished an assemblage to be gathered together, but these votaries of fashion had come to drink the health-giving waters.

Not much, however, of the invalid is to be discerned in the appearance of the knots of gay ladies, the most of whom wore *negligéés* and hoods of the then fashionable cherry colour, or richly-attired beaux, wits,

and pretty fellows, as they were called, who are grouped about the room, some near the gallery, where the musicians are discoursing sweet music, others lolling on the chairs and benches placed in the centre of the apartment, or leaning against the window overlooking the large flagged space known as the King's Bath, and others forming a circle round the recess, where, from a marble column, the water which renders Bath so famous bubbles up enveloped in a cloud of vapour.

Yellow glasses, filled with the somewhat ill-flavoured beverage, stand on a slab, with a background of the rich dark flowers of early autumn, artistically arranged.

Above the chorus of voices in the Pump Room, those of the softer sex often predominated: they crowded together, as we have said, in knots, and in very intelligible whispers they indulged in sallies of wit and repartee, and made remarks on the rest of the company, and uttered criticisms, raillery, and scandal with charming indifference as to whether or no their often

insulting speeches were heard by the persons at whom they were launched.

‘Your servant, Miss Virginal,’ says Miss Prattle, raising her voice so as to be heard above the flute solo which was then being performed. ‘Ah, my dear Lady Rigglesby,’ continued Miss Prattle, in the same breath, ‘how is your throat? I hear your ladyship was at the ball last night.’

‘Oh, Miss Prattle,’ drawled out her ladyship languidly, ‘I’ve been half dead all night; I protest, I wish there was no such thing as a nerve. But, my dear Miss Virginal,’ she asked, turning to that lady, ‘who dresses your hair?’

Miss Virginal was a young lady of about fifty, who still preserved the airs and behaviour of fifteen, when she was a celebrated toast.

‘Good morning, Mrs. Finick,’ cries out Miss Prattle, as that lady seated herself near. ‘You’ll be at the assembly to-night? All the world will be there. Poor old Mrs. O’Dowdy! Did you see her hobble to the ball last night? To-day she is so lame she can hardly crawl.’

That Hibernian lady of fashion, who was just then indulging in a pinch of snuff out of her chased gold snuff-box, was quite within ear-shot of Miss Prattle's polite remarks.

'That thing they have just played,' observed Lady Riggleby, in her languid tones, 'is a charming solo. I don't remember to have heard it before. Pray, Major Bounce, cry out encore.'

'Has Sir Toby O'Shamrock settled his tea-drinking night with Colonel Firebrace? I hear they have both fixed on the same night. I hope they won't quarrel,' simpered little Miss Spicer, 'for they are both in a flame.'

Miss Spicer was conspicuous by the extravagant fashion of her attire. A small bugle cap, no bigger than a crown piece, hung on her head; her hair was powdered grey, and braided up like the mane of a colt to be sold at a fair; she wore a loose sacque of bright green silk, short petticoats, and a hoop eight yards wide. Poor old Alderman Spicer! His pretty little daughter affected the fine lady, talked of her

winnings and losings at brag, the best hair-dresser, the prices of silks, the newest fashions, and she spent every day, at milliners' shops and auctions, the good money her father made by shillings.

'Bravo, bravissimo,' calls out Dick Dilettante, a young gentleman, an acknowledged leader of the taste at a new opera, and a man of wit and pleasure about town, as that delightful warbler, Miss Wren, was straining her throat in a sonnet, and at the same time he thrusts in a note of his own, while, with a brilliant on his finger, he points to three ladies sailing into the room. 'Egad,' he exclaims, loud enough to be heard by the ladies in question, 'they are as pale as ashes, though last night they were as red as roses, and as plump as pigeons.'

Intermingled with the scandal of the last assembly, such was the style of conversation that prevailed in the Pump Room ; but in addition to their love of sarcasm, so overbearing and haughty were these dames of quality, that only the stern sway of

their despotic sovereign, of whom we shall presently have to speak, kept them in check.

Amongst this crowd of visitors and fashionables are to be found some old acquaintances of ours. Let us pass them briefly in review.

The lapse of years has made little change in Mrs. Herbert. Her bright hazel eyes are yet undimmed, and the little lady's step has lost none of its elasticity. She still indulges that inveterate habit of unconsciously speaking her thoughts aloud. She is doing so on this very morning, to the intense disgust and ill-concealed indignation of Mr. Vezey, of Dyrham, a retired sugar-baker, and the father of Edward Herbert's friend.

His first greetings were barely over, when the sugar-baker heard Mrs. Herbert say, half aloud, in her strange, abstracted way :

'Wretched man ! How he loves to be with people of quality, and glories in his ostentation ! Now I shall hear, for the

fiftieth time, what he is doing to his *place*, and that it is the *completest thing* in the country.'

This was a cruel though unconscious thrust, for, in truth, Mr. Vezey had seated himself beside Mrs. Herbert with no other intention than that of pouring into her ears a full account of his doings at Dyrham, where he was *tasting down* (as was the expression then in vogue) the old family mansion of a decayed gentleman, which he had bought, into an Italian villa, and laying out the gardens after plans brought from Holland.

So disgusted was Mr. Vezey, that he abruptly quitted Mrs. Herbert's side, and tacked himself on to another group standing near.

In this group, whom do we again meet with, but our old friend Lieutenant Hawser! 'that thorough-going seaman,' d'ye see, must possess a charmed life, for neither the French pike, by which he was said to have been run through the body, nor the briny deep, into which he was cast, have

shortened the term of his existence. A fact which he stood ready to prove in the Pump Room of Bath.

The explanation of the lieutenant's reappearance after his death had been mourned for, is easy. When he leapt on board the *Redoubtable*, a French sailor made a furious thrust at him with his pike, which, thanks to a wide ill-fitting coat, only grazed the doughty lieutenant's side, but, so violent was the thrust, that it knocked him off his legs and tumbled him overboard. Hawser, however, being a good swimmer, laid hold of a rope that was hanging over the side of the ship, and quickly swung himself on board. A French officer, seeing the occurrence, took him by the hand and helped him up, and also made him a prisoner. He was kindly treated on board by all the French officers, and carried to a French port, from which he was transferred to a prison in the interior of the country, and there he was kept for two years, until an exchange of prisoners gave him his liberty. On his

return to his native land, the mortification he felt at seeing young sprigs of the aristocracy, who were in swaddling-clothes when he was risking his life in battle for his country, promoted over his head, decided him to resign his commission, and settle himself on a small estate between Bristol and Bath, that had been left to him by a relative. He had made occasional visits to Bath, on account of his health, and it may well be imagined how great was the surprise his first appearance in that city caused his friend and former ship-mate, Richard Nash; indeed, the latter, though no coward, as we have seen, actually started and turned pale, as walking one day, down King's Mead Street, the well remembered voice of his deceased friend hailed him from behind with his customary salutation :

‘ What cheer, brother, what cheer, how lies the land ?’

As Mr. Vezey joined the group we have alluded to, Lieutenant Hawser was loud in dispute with Squire Boscawen, a tall raw-

boned country squire, with a loud voice and blustering manners, on the relative merits of punch and bombo. Miss Grizel, the squire's sister, a spinster of mature years, being deferred to, had given—as was natural, Hawser being a bachelor—her decision in favour of bombo. Cautious old Vezey, more reasonably, would give no opinion at all, having never, as he said, tasted the liquor in question; but, to his great delight, he found an attentive auditor in Miss Grizel, and into her ears he poured a full description of his *place*, and his gardens, and his yews, and how the latter were clipped into the shapes of giants, and cypress trees into lovers, and hollies into bears.

In another part of the room Margaret Musgrave, rather improved than the reverse by time, chats gaily with Miss Vezey, of Dyrham, a pretty, lively girl, with flaxen hair and blue eyes, a great toast in Bath just now, for she has beauty and a large fortune. She is now the Bristol sugar baker's sole heiress, for her brother,

the poor, vulgar, would-be fine gentleman, who had so often excited Mrs. Herbert's ire, has been dead some years.

Miss Musgrave has long since conquered her girlish and unrequited passion for Edward Herbert, and so she can now watch with equanimity the growing affection betwixt Edward and her young friend, Barbara Vezey; nay, she can pity the lovers, and resolve to aid them, if possible, for she foresees that the course of true love in their case will not run smooth. Mrs. Herbert will be hostile to such a union, she feels sure, and probably Mr. Vezey will be so also. So Barbara Vezey confides all her secrets and her little troubles and doubts to Margaret, and at the same time rallies her friend upon the attentions of the loud spoken, bluff Squire Boscawen; and though Margaret dissembles, and laughs, and scouts at the idea, inwardly she feels that she could be well content as the mistress of the fine old manor-house at Boscawen Park.

Edward Herbert himself is standing near the window overlooking the King's Bath.

He is a fine, handsome man now, in the prime of life, a true gentleman in manners and appearance, and singularly free from the affectations and follies and conceits of many of the beaux and 'pretty fellows' assembled in the Pump Room that morning.

By his side stands a gentleman of about his own age, richly, though gaudily dressed, plain of feature, for his face is rugged and harsh, as are often his singularly disagreeable jests. But harsh features, unkind and sorry jokes, alike belie his heart, a heart ever brimful of love and tenderness for human kind, ever ready to sympathise with the afflicted. His hand was as open as his heart, and whatever the foibles and follies of Richard Nash, none can deny to him the attribute of an abundant and overflowing charity, which, let us hope, out-balanced the weight of any of his delinquencies.

We shall now see him in his mimic kingdom. He had been raised to the sovereignty of the City of Bath, or in other words, he had been chosen, by universal

consent, Master of the Ceremonies, and empowered to set up a band of music against the poison of the reptile of Doctor Malevolus, and he had signally triumphed over that spiteful pamphleteer. The dominion of Richard Nash having become secure, he determined to support it with the strictest attention. He was an autocrat, and governed despotically ; but certainly Bath became glorious in his reign, and his subjects had no cause for complaints, but were benefited by the very rigour of his laws. He came to Bath when it was one of the poorest cities in England, its buildings mean, and its inhabitants rude and impolite. The accommodations in the town were indifferent, and there was but one sash-windowed house in the city. Ten couple were then thought a large assembly at a ball or other public amusement.

All was changed after the arrival of Richard Nash. The Pump Room was built, and a subscription for a good band of music was instantly set on foot. Thanks to Mr. Nash, the stream of fashion flowed

into Bath, and continued so to do, and under his rule the city became great, rich, and flourishing. The sovereign, for sole emblem of his regal power, wears a simple white hat, which he holds under his arm this morning, whilst escorting his cousin about the Pump Room, and furnishing him with various items of information, for Herbert is now paying his first visit to Bath.

‘By all I hear, cousin, you have done great things for Bath,’ said Herbert, as he cast his eyes over the crowded and fashionable assemblage. ‘And,’ he added, with a smile, ‘your regal dignity sits gracefully upon you : you govern your subjects well, and I know that the *rôle* suits you ; by nature you were cut out to lead the world of fashion.’

‘Oh, the sceptre is in no feeble hands, I’ll assure you,’ replied Nash, with an air of complacency. ‘But,’ he added, with an affectation of melancholy, ‘“ Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.” I have my cares as well as more potent monarchs ; sometimes

my subjects are inclined to rebel. Note that tall, raw-boned fellow yonder.'

Following the direction of his cousin's finger, Herbert duly noted Squire Boscawen, whose stentorian voice, even though modulated to its lowest key, sounded above the chatter of all the flirts, coquettes, and coxcombs.

'The man is a brute, a bear, cousin Edward, a fellow who, as you may hear, talks as loud as though he were shouting "Yoicks ! tally ho !" in the hunting-field. What do you think ? He came in boots to the assembly the first evening of his arrival : I marched straight up to him, and says I, "Your servant, sir ; sure you have forgot your horse ?" This hint was sufficient ; though a fox-hunter, he hath some brains, and that's more that can be said for old Vezey. An 'twere not for his daughter I would not tolerate him ; but she is a charming young creature.'

And Nash, as he spoke, cast so tender a glance on the flaxen-haired beauty, that Herbert felt a sudden pang of jealousy,

though the next moment he laughed inwardly at his own folly, for he considered his cousin the last man likely to take the fancy of a lovely young girl, with his harsh features, ungainly form, and tawdry dress.

‘I suppose there is no lack of your particular friends, the doctors, here. I am told that Bath is a very mushroom-bed of the medical profession,’ said Herbert, with a sly twinkle of the eye.

‘No, no, we have enough of the fraternity and to spare,’ replied Nash. ‘And egad, there are plenty of undertakers, too, to keep ’em company. Our healing waters draw invalids to Bath by scores, and as a natural consequence, doctors, apothecaries, and undertakers multiply. But what would you have? The vultures scent the carrion from afar.’

‘What unsavoury subject have you gotten on to now?’ asked a pleasant, cheery-looking gentleman, dressed in sober black velvet, full-trimmed, and wearing a voluminous tie periwig.

‘Egad, Dr. Cheney, you heard but

the sag end of my remarks,' replied Nash, laughing. 'The first part of them referred to your brethren.'

'As usual, abusing us, I suppose, eh, Mr. Herbert?'

'My cousin had not got quite so far at present,' replied the latter, with an amused smile.

'Come now, Cheney, confess, and make a clean breast,' said Nash, looking very solemn. 'Tell us who was the last patient you gave up to the parson and the sexton. Now, did not old Shroud, the undertaker, tip you £5 when you recommended him the black job? Why, bless you, Ned,' he added, turning to his cousin, 'our furnishers of funerals at Bath bribe as high for the possession of a dead body, as a candidate does for a vote at a contested borough. If you want to thrive and fatten here, be a doctor or an undertaker.'

'La, Mr. Nash, do not shock our ears by talking about undertakers,' exclaimed Miss Grizel, with a rather affected little shiver.

'Well, ma'am, you'll not deny that we

must all die some day, sooner or later,' replied Nash; and, to the further discomposure of the lady's nerves, he added, abruptly and somewhat rudely, 'As you and I, ma'am, have passed our youthful days, it may rather be sooner than later, so it behoves us to be prepared.'

'Mr. Nash speaks now in all the vigour of health, and he is full of courage,' said Dr. Cheney, tapping his snuff-box, and, politely presenting it open to Miss Grizel, 'Do you take snuff, miss?' Then, turning to Nash, he continued, 'Ah, ladies, you should see Mr. Nash when he is sick. I assure you he is then the veriest poltroon that ever took physic. Egad, he would make a vow to turn Trappist, an he thought'twould save his life.'

'Calumny, all calumny,' replied Nash, raising his eyebrows and hands in affected horror. 'Cheney owes me a grudge, because I know the sons of *Æsculapius* too well. I know all their arts and devices to get practice, and how complacently they contemplate the ailments of suffering humanity. You should only hear their

confidential talk together, when what they call a good season comes. "Ah," says Dr. Senna, rubbing his hands, "what a blessed season is this!" and he absolutely chuckles. "A beautiful Scotch mist for twenty-eight days successively, with the wind in the east, and blowing like old Harry," replies Dr. Killmany. "Nothing to be heard but sneezing, and wheezing, and coughing; and nothing to be seen but swelled jaws, running noses, and blood-shot eyes," responds Dr. Senna. "I can't go out of doors, but I have the pleasure of hearing everybody complaining, finding that catarrhs and rheumatism are multiplying on every side," says Dr. Killmany, with a grin. "Good luck to an easterly wind, say I," ejaculates Dr. Senna; "I feel myself in the highest spirits when everybody's nerves are out of order."

'Never mind, sir,' interposed old Mr. Vezey, when Nash had finished his banter; 'let him rail, your turn will come some day, and when he needs your help he'll sing to quite another tune.'

‘Eh, an I follow your example, Mr. Vezey, ’twill not be long before the doctor’s turn comes,’ replied our hero, fixing his eyes intently on the huge protuberance which usurped the place of what had once been the sugar-baker’s waist. ‘What was it Dr. Senna attended you for? Wasn’t it a threatening of apoplexy? Never is there a good feast but it pays the doctors tenfold in surfeits, cholics, and indigestions, eh, Cheney? Egad, Mr. Vezey, the mayor gave us a sumptuous feast last week. The broiled salmon and venison pasty were most tempting. Did you ever hear the old saying, Cheney?’ he added, turning from the indignant sugar-baker to the doctor, who, knowing Nash well, took all his jokes in good part. ‘“The feast is a better friend to the doctor than the plague.”’

‘Take care that your own suppers become not my friends, Mr. Nash,’ said the doctor, assuming an air of exaggerated gravity.

‘My suppers!’ replied Nash. ‘I would challenge any of this present company to

partake of 'em without any fear as to consequences. I'll invite you all, some day, to my modest evening meal, and I'll warrant you against the slightest headache the next morning. Why, on that very same day, and at the same feast, when Mr. Vezey got his apoplectic stroke, that very same broiled salmon and venison pasty——'Twas so, I had it from Dr. Senna himself,' added Nash, addressing the sugar-baker.

'Then Senna told a confounded lie,' growled the latter.

'——Gave Slender, the stay-maker, a bilious cholic and vomiting fit, from having eaten himself into a fever,' continued Nash, in a very cool and deliberate tone; 'and Buckram, the tailor, got a dislocated shoulder from being overtaken by liquor.'

'Avast there, shipmate!' broke in Hawser, winking at the company; 'you had better 'bout ship and stand upon another tack. Hark'e, brother, I'll just remind you that you have lowered your topsails yourself, and been overtaken by liquor before now.'

'Body o' me! You doating old dog, when did you ever see me drunk?'

'Oh, oh! we shall find him out now. What, drunk, Mr. Sly, drunk!' said Dr. Cheney, triumphantly.

'Vile slander; the vilest slander!' exclaimed Nash.

'Belay, shipmate, belay. Come, no humbug. I know plain sailing; I know a card from a compass, though I say it, that should not say it. Howsomever, it don't signify a rotten ratline talking. I'll soon bring you to your bearings. Sure you'll not deny that you was drunk on board the *Hampton Court*. So you need not tack hither or thither, but speak straightforward, brother.'

'Mr. Nash drunk! Oh, fie!' said a soft voice in a tone of affected concern and grief, and Nash turned to see Barbara Vezey standing at his elbow, with a look of well-assumed reproof on her beautiful face.

'Yes, Miss Barbara, drunk, an you will have it,' exclaimed Nash, furiously, 'and all

through the machinations and detestable conspiracy of a set of d—— kidnappers on board his Majesty's ship the *Hampton Court*, who had nearly poisoned me with a horrible compound called bombo.'

CHAPTER XVI.

THE ROYAL SUPPER.

‘COME, gentlemen, eat and welcome ; spare, and the devil choke you.’

This extraordinary invitation issued from the lips of no less a personage than the Monarch of Bath, who, seated at the head of his table, looked cheerily round upon his assembled guests. He had lost no time in giving the invitation to supper which he had spoken of in the Pump Room, and Squire Boscawen, Dr. Cheney, Herbert, and Hawser, and two or three others, formed the party.

The supper consisted of roast breast of mutton, boiled chickens, and hot potatoes, all well cooked, and neatly and even

elegantly served. The strange manner in which Nash had accosted the company, and with which we have opened our chapter, was nothing new to his familiar and old friends ; they knew that it was but his way of trying to take off all restraint and ceremony, but the Rev. Mr. Stiff, whose long grace had been followed by this profane speech, was so shocked by it, that he did not recover himself till supper was half over, and then he commenced concocting the heads of a sermon which should touch upon this irreverence, in the presence, if possible, of the delinquent, if he should have the grace to be at church the following Sunday.

Meanwhile, poor Nash, in utter ignorance of the scandal he had given, looked upon his guests with a face beaming with kindness and good nature. Open-hearted and full of benevolence and generosity, he was never so glad as on those occasions, when his acquaintance gathered around his hospitable board.

Many and many a pleasant gathering

had there been in that spacious old chamber in the house in St. John's Place, but none more lively, perhaps, than on the evening of which we are writing: for what with Hawser's dry speeches and nautical idiom, and the constant good humoured passages of arms between Cheney and Nash, the company were kept in a state of chronic laughter, which affected even the passers by, for the night being hot and sultry, the red cloth hangings were drawn back from the bow window, and the air came in laden with the scent of jasmine and vine that climbed about the casement. The table, with its group of wax lights, and its sparkling glass and china, formed a pleasant contrast to the sombre hues of the rest of the apartment, where dark oak wainscot and dark oak floor, and the dusky Turkey carpet, were only relieved, here and there, by a patch of white moonlight, stealing in through the broad vine leaves and the scented tendrils of the jasmine.

'Ten o'clock,' said Nash, as the Abbey bells chimed the hour; 'at eleven I shall be

in bed. I love your company, my good friends, as you know, but I alter my hours for no man.'

'Ay,' said Cheney, jestingly, 'like other brutes, you lay down as soon as you have filled your belly.'

'Very true,' replied Nash, promptly, 'and this prescription I had from my neighbour's cow, who is a better physician than you, and a superior judge of plants, notwithstanding you have written so learnedly on the vegetable diet; but, egad, Cheney, if you live on grass and roots you are getting deuced fat on them.'

Dr. Cheney joined in the laugh at his own expense raised by this retort. The only person in the company who did not fully join in the general mirth was Edward Herbert, who seemed unusually silent and taciturn, so much so, that at length Lieutenant Hawser, who was seated next him plucked him by the sleeve and bade him be of better cheer.

'Take heart, shipmate, an'tis as I guess that your sweetheart, whosoe'er she be,

won't come to, try her on another tack, but as for sailing in the wind's eye, no, no, brother, smite my taffril, no !'

'Indeed, sir, you are making a mistake,' replied Herbert, who was nevertheless so entirely disconcerted by the seaman's speech, that it was plain to all present that the latter had hit the mark.

'You don't go the right way to work, Ned,' said Nash, gaily, who conceived that Miss Musgrave was the object of his cousin's affection, and that her present apparent indifference was the cause of his dejection. 'You should take a lesson from Cheney here ; he knows how to get into the good graces of the ladies. Hang it, sir, that is the secret of his success, and 'tis the same with our friend, Mr. Stiff ; he hath not been long in Bath, as you know, and yet the ladies would die for him.'

Here a complacent smile played at the corners of the Rev. Mr. Stiff's mouth. Nash, observing this, proceeded :

'Allow me to illustrate what I was saying, by detailing to you a conversation I

had the happiness to overhear, one morning, in the Pump Room.'

'Nash,' interposed Dr. Cheney, 'your friends all know that you are gifted with great powers of imagination.'

'Let me be hanged if what I tell you is not all true,' replied Nash, with assumed gravity. 'Well then, you know our friend the Rev. Dr. Toady, how polite, how facetious, how full of anecdote he is, and how his company is required at all balls, assemblies, and concerts. He stands in the highest favour with that rich dowager, Lady Bab Dilcote. Egad, I should say she is in love with him. I stood near them, as they were imbibing their morning's draught at the well. "Madam," said the reverend doctor, with a profound bow, "I have the honour to be your ladyship's most obedient and most humble servant. I have been anxiously expecting your ladyship to visit my chapel, that I might submit to the refined taste of your ladyship a few little ornaments and decorations." "Truly, Dr. Toady," replied the lady, condescendingly,

"I must acknowledge that I am acquainted with no place of worship, which is so well calculated for genteel people to say their prayers in, as your chapel. There is every contrivance for warmth, ease, and repose ; and the company is select, well-bred, and well-dressed. In general, the mode of performing the service is graceful, agreeable and judicious. No violence, no scolding, no terrifying stories about hell and the devil, such as one hears in vulgar parish churches. In your chapel, on the contrary, a tender respect is shown for polite ears in language, and at the end of the service we are dismissed with a graceful benediction and a bow."

Nash ended his improvised speech with a profound bow and a flourish of his handkerchief, whilst the guests were convulsed with laughter, high above which rose the mighty guffaws of Squire Boscawen, intermingled with his 'To un, to un, Mr. Nash ! Let's roast the parsons—let's run a rig on the parsons. Adzooks ! they always stick by the women.' The mirth was still further

increased, however, by Mr. Stiff rising to his feet, and exclaiming in lofty accents, so soon as he could make himself heard—

‘Gentlemen, will you permit me to state that I know nothing whatever of Lady Bab Diltote. I know only little of the Rev. Dr. Toady, but I entertain a firm conviction that all this conversation is a mere effort of Mr. Nash’s playful imagination, and has not a particle of truth in it.

And Mr. Stiff looked daggers at Mr. Nash, as he resumed his seat.

‘Modesty, ’tis all his modesty,’ replied Nash; ‘he doth not wish us to know what favour he and his brethren of the cloth are in with the ladies.’

‘Oons, sir, you are right there, by my soul you are, Mr. Nash!’ shouted Boscawen, with a loud guffaw. ‘Why, there’s sister Grizel, she’s for ever talking of Parson Toady. Zounds, sir, she has gotten so mighty pious and good, all along of his preachments, I’s warrant, that she must needs say grace of an hour long t’other day, and a steaming haunch of venison under

my nose getting cold all the time ; but, i' faith, I fell to and tackled it, before she had made an end.'

'Miss Boscawen is a lady of singular piety, I believe,' said Mr. Stiff, in tones of indignation, 'but——'

The reverend gentleman was going to add a few words more, probably to rebuke the irreverence of the Squire, upon whom his eyes were severely fixed, when Hawser, whose wits were somewhat mystified by the good Burgundy he had freely partaken of, and whose ears had just then caught the words of praise with which his reverence had named the fair Miss Grizel, imagining that that gentleman was enamoured of the lady, interrupted him, exclaiming in maudlin tones :

'If so be as how it be set down in the log book of fate, that this here reverend parson and Miss Grizel is to grapple, why then, squire, says I, let 'em e'en wed at once.'

'Upon my word, sir, this is intolerable,' vociferated the indignant Mr. Stiff, his

face in a flame, 'to couple a lady's name with mine in this impudent manner.'

'Mr. Parson Stiff, here's your good health,' shouted the squire, as he filled his glass; 'and here's the good health of Mrs. Grizel Stiff, whenever she is so to be. Though I am no great parson's man myself, zounds! I know when to call out "Church and King," though we've been more used to hear "Church in danger" of late years. But that's neither here nor there. "Down with the Rump," say I. Whew!' whistled the squire, with a wide stare, for his brains were rapidly becoming as muddled as Hawser's, as he continued his harangue—'Oons! gentlemen, I say that this here parson and sister Grizel would make a mighty pious couple. Body o' me, they might convert all Bath.'

'All save the tradespeople,' said Nash, dryly.

'What do you mean?' asked Mr. Stiff; 'have tradesmen no souls to be saved?'

'I suppose so,' replied the Master of the Ceremonies, 'but they must frequent some

other chapel than that of our dear friend Dr. Toady. Did you never hear him express his sentiments? He is a staunch stickler for etiquette and rank. Egad, he knows the rules of precedence as well as I do, and enforces them even more strictly. This is as it ought to be in Bath,' added Nash, with a comical smile. 'You should hear the doctor and Lady Bab—"Your ladyship knows,"' continued Nash, mimicking the obsequious tone of voice of Dr. Toady, "that I ever most carefully abstain from giving any offence by mentioning cards, routs, drums, plays, or balls, and the other innocent amusements of the gay world, which ill-bred fanatics denounce with so much harshness. I exclude all persons in trade from amongst my congregation. Your ladyship knows how severely shocked my nerves were on Sunday, when I beheld my congregation petrified with astonishment, at seeing the wife of a tradesman amongst an audience that is never contaminated with vulgar society. Amongst my congregation, I always observe the rules of precedence."

‘Tis all very well for Mr. Nash to crack his jokes on us, Mr. Stiff,’ said Cheney, who saw that the parson, being unused to his host’s eccentricities and raillery, was becoming irritated. ‘His Majesty of Bath hath no refractory subjects; but we of the clerical and medical professions are not so fortunate: we have to contend with self-willed patients, and you have to convert hardened sinners; his majesty, on the other hand, has but to command, and his subjects bow their heads and obey.’

‘Indeed, you are making a mighty mistake,’ said Nash, in a pathetic tone, assumed for the occasion. ‘Alas, like other sovereigns, I find that royal power is not the path to ease and peace. Besides, my kingdom is elective, and is held on the terms of complete accommodation to the public will. Why, at the return of every season, I run the risk of being tossed in a blanket by the capricious fair sex, if partners happen not to be as thick as hops, or if they won’t dance. Why, if young miss is so ugly that there is no one so good natured as

to offer her his hand for the evening, mamma blames me, and protests I am the most ill-bred and inattentive wretch in the world, and the young misses themselves have acquired such a confounded share of impudence from their Bath education, that only by the most despotic exercise of my kingly authority am I able to keep order.'

'Look ye here, brother, look ye here,' interposed Hawser, in very deliberate tones; 'what a deal of stuff you have just pumped up: if you had never made a cruise in a three-master, I should call you a chicken-hearted land-lubber. 'Ods firkin, if my men didn't obey me, I'd give 'em a rope's end, d'ye see, keel haul me if I wouldn't, and why don't you do the like? As for parsons and doctors, brother, and such like spawn, as have never been out o' sight o' land or seen foul weather, who would strike to such shambling, half-timbered, fair-weather sparks?' After he had delivered this speech in words that halted on the way, the lieutenant shut his eyes and leant back in his chair.

Then Nash took upon himself to lecture the half conscious Hawser for his disrespectful remarks upon the two learned professions. And Mr. Stiff, turning to the lieutenant, addressed him in tones so loud and indignant as caused him to open his eyes again :

‘ Sir, as a minister of religion, let me tell you, that if I had ever been out of sight of land and seen foul weather, as you elegantly express yourself, I should certainly never have expected to learn much that would have profited me in a spiritual way on board a ship.’

Hawser, looking at Mr. Stiff with a dreamy stare, exclaimed, ‘ The d——l fire your running tackle ! Egad ! three pouring their broadsides upon me ! I never was so grappled since I knew a cat from a capstan.’

‘ Yoicks, yoicks !’ shouted Squire Boscawen, who had a very vague conception of the discussion that was going on ; Church in danger ! Church in danger ! down with the Rump, I say !’ The worthy squire,

like most country gentlemen, professed (in words) great zeal for the Church, though, if one were to judge from their conduct towards the clergy themselves, whom they treated with contempt and disrespect, their zeal was very frothy.

Edward Herbert now made an effort to shake off his gloom and join in the mirth of the company, at least in appearance, and he tried to bring back the conversation to the subject of his cousin's kingly office, for he had begun to fear lest his High Church Tory friend, the squire, now warm with wine, might so far forget himself, as to utter sentiments and toasts more of a Jacobite tendency than might be prudent, in a mixed company, in those disturbed times.

'After all,' observed Herbert, 'it is a mighty pleasant thing to be King of Bath. If his majesty does meet with a frown now and then, how many smiles does he not win from fair ladies and great lords? And how easy is his work.'

'I am quite of your opinion,' exclaimed Dr. Cheney.

‘Easy work, do you say? Why, zounds! Compare my work with that of a doctor—of Cheney’s there, if you like. What has he had to do to get into practice? Nothing, absolutely nothing, but to secure the good opinions of the ladies. You should see the sly dog pay a visit to a lady: when he feels her pulse, he gently squeezes her hand, finds out what she likes, and prescribes accordingly; then he entertains her with all the news he has been able to pick up, and if there has been a dearth of news, he makes a little himself for her; if she has nothing the matter with her, he is sure to find out symptoms of disease, and he pities her sufferings, though she may have never an ache, and he admires her patience, though she be as crabbed as old Nick.’

‘Come, come, Nash,’ broke in Dr. Cheney, ‘this is all vastly clever, but we all know how fertile your imagination is——’

‘But as for me,’ continued Nash, not noticing the interruption, ‘my kingly cares are of the weightiest. All mistakes of

precedence I may chance to make are mortal sins. When I go out I am expected to know everybody, smile at everybody, bow to everybody I meet. The motion of my hand to my hat is incessant, and the innumerable obeisances demanded of me afflict my spine with excruciating torments.'

'Well, cousin,' said Herbert, laughing, 'you have got a good strong back-bone of your own. You may bear a deal.'

'And then,' continued Nash pathetically, 'only think of the tricks and deceits I am exposed to sometimes. Why, look at the dreadful blunder I made only the other night at the assembly. Lady Bab Dilcote will never forgive me. She is become my bitter enemy, I believe.' Here Nash looked very rueful and put his handkerchief to his eyes. 'O lor, there was a mighty upset. You all know her ladyship, and that she is as proud as Lucifer, and as vain as a monkey in a red coat. She nearly excited an insurrection amongst my subjects because I introduced a London peruquier, in disguise, to her daughter as a

partner, and suffered her son to dance with a lady's maid who had borrowed her mistress's dress for the evening. Bless me! Lady Bab is my bitter enemy,' and Nash again applied his handkerchief to his eyes.

'Ahoy there, shipmate! what cheer?' cried out Hawser, in unsteady tones, his ears catching the sound of the word *enemy*. 'What said ye? enemy said ye? what's that about enemies? I care not a peck of bargow for the enemy. If I should ever come [yard-arm to yard-arm with Jack Spaniard you shall have a Don's nose to hang in your closet. I'll be up with Jack Spaniard some day.'

'*Here's a health to him that's far away*,' shouted Squire Boscawen, as he filled a bumper to drink this Jacobite toast, not noticing Herbert's significant looks, admonishing him to be more cautious.

To draw attention from the toast, Herbert turned to Nash.

'Come,' he exclaimed, standing up, 'gentlemen, fill bumpers, and I will give you

a loyal toast which I am sure you will all drink. Here's to the King of Bath.'

The toast was drunk with enthusiasm by all present, and Nash, after duly returning thanks, said :

'Gentlemen, some wag hath this morning sent me a copy of certain rules and orders supposed to have been drawn up and proclaimed by my majesty, along with a few doggrel verses appended to them.'

'Let us hear them,' exclaimed all the company in one voice.

Nash then went to his escritoire and took out a paper, which, with a grave voice he commenced reading :

'The rules of his Excellency Richard Nash, Esquire, the Governor General of the Diversions of Bath:

'When you first come to Bath, whether sick or in health, you must have a physician, and as they all equally take inordinate fees, you may choose whom you like.

'Then the doctor will find out that there is absolute need that Friend Jerry Price should bleed you.

‘ Then he will prescribe some drops or pills to prevent all infection from water or air. After that you may drink at the pump or bath without fear.

‘ When you come out of the bath you must make different calls, at Hayes ’ or Lovelace’s, and pay for the balls.

‘ Then you must subscribe to Leak’s, Simot’s, or Morgan’s.

‘ Then, when all this is done, you may gamble and drink as you please, until all your money is spent, when you may quietly march off.

‘ Some come here for pleasure, and others for health,
Some come here to squander, others to get wealth ;
To these all our subjects, here merrily meeting,
We, Governor Nash, do send out our greeting :
Whereas it to us hath been fully made known,
Some queer folks presume to have wills of their own,
And think when they come to such places as these,
They’ve unlimited license to do as they please,
Whence frequent disorders do daily arise ;
To prevent such abuses, whate’er in us lies,
We publish these rules, consider’d at leisure,
And expect due observance : for such is our pleasure.’

CHAPTER XVII.

THE CARD ROOM.

THOUGH November has set in gloomily, and though the political aspect of affairs in England is as gloomy as the month, for civil war threatens to deluge the land with blood, the votaries of fashion in Bath seem intent only on pleasure-seeking. Little do they care, apparently, whether the representative of their native monarchs is to regain the throne of his fathers, or whether the Elector of Brunswick holds his court at St. James's, where great Whig nobles bow ceremoniously and obsequiously to their rude foreign ruler and the uncouth German courtiers whom he ever kept around his person. Rumour reported that the young

Chevalier St. George had already been proclaimed king, as James the Third, that the combined forces of the Highlanders and the English Jacobites were marching on Penrith, and that General Carpenter was in pursuit of them ; but such alarming rumours troubled little the gay Bath world, nor did it even trouble them that Lord Windsor's Horse and Sir Robert Rich's Dragoons had been sent into Bath itself, a town that had always been suspected of disaffection by the government, or that several active Jacobites had been actually secured in this their place of rendezvous, along with two hundred horses and eleven chests of fire-arms, three pieces of cannon, and moulds to cast cannon :* so on this gloomy November evening the Card Room in the old Guildhall—for Harrison's Assembly Room was yet to be built—was crowded with fashionable company ; the gentlemen dressed gaily in laced coats and waistcoats, and well powdered perukes ; the ladies conspicuous by the immense rotun-

* Oldmixon's History.

dity of their hoops, the brilliancy of their robes of damask and velvet, their laces of Mechlin and Mignonette, their rouged cheeks, dotted, here and there, with black patches, and their hair dressed in the latest Parisian fashion. The spacious room was beset with card tables, each of which had its complement of players. Whist, loo, brag, quadrille, and the then fashionable game of commerce seemed to enjoy an equal amount of favour. The King of Bath, with a whist book in his hand, for it was the fashion then to have a whist book, strolled up and down, now halting at one table, now at another, watching the proceedings of his subjects, sometimes with a cheery smile, sometimes with a shade of uneasiness on his kindly countenance, according as he sees either the pleasant calm face of one who plays for amusement solely, or the angry, contracted brow, and agitated looks of the gambler.

True, Nash is a gamester himself, a gamester by profession; for his private means are scanty, and it is by gaming

alone that he keeps up so brilliant and splendid an appearance.

But how unlike was Nash to most others of his class; again and again, his generosity caused him to be utterly unmindful of his own interests, and to let opportunities slip which others would have profited by to secure for themselves a sure and opulent future. Generous, humane, and honourable, he seemed at all times utterly oblivious of self, and the very gains won at the gaming table passed often from his hands, as soon as they were acquired, in works of the most tender and abundant charity.

Though his royalty was a shadow and his title a mock one, yet his state had to be supported, and poverty being his bane, as it had been with real sovereigns, like poor Margaret of Anjou and the Stuarts, he had recourse to gaming as a means of support, and was thus drawn to act in concert with wretches whom, in the depths of his noble and honest heart, he despised and loathed.

As varied were the moods of his subjects on this night as were their ages and rank

in life. Here were the grave and the gay, the young and the old. Antiquated dowagers and spinsters, and miss in her teens, radiant with the bloom of youth. Bloated old citizens, who are getting rid of some of the superfluous wealth acquired in Lombard Street or Bishopsgate, and haggard-eyed lords, who have squandered fortunes on the turf, are trying to redeem them at the gaming table in Bath. What a strange scene this brilliantly lighted room presented ! It was like a stage : the actors the different gaming parties, each absorbed in his or her *rôle*. The many wax candles in the girandoles and candelabra dispersed about the room lit up, with their radiance, the faces of the players, some haggard, some fresh and blooming. Jewels sparkled, silks and rich brocades rustled, and perfumes made the air heavy. Young women, beautiful before coming into the Card Room, half an hour afterwards lose all their loveliness, their features are disturbed and confused, their looks eager and fierce, and filled with

anxiety and alarm. People who, before they sat down to play, were all politeness, and conversed with each other with such affability, as if they would be glad of nothing so much as to serve each other, were now bitter enemies, only because one happened to win five or ten guineas from the other. The eyes of winners, on the other hand, sparkled with joy. And thus the evening's round of amusement went on; while at one time, might be heard the buzz of many voices, at another time, a deep silence prevailed, broken only by an occasional 'demme' from some pretty fellow or young buck, the angry snarl of a martyr to gout or rheumatism, whose losses at loo had aggravated his pangs, the hoydenish laughter of a young miss over the revoke of an adversary, or the severe tones of an elderly spinster proclaiming that her partner had trumped her trick.

Nash now halted at one of the tables where a party were playing at whist. Two of the gentlemen were dressed in the sombre garb of the clerical and medical

professions ; the third was clad like a naval officer in a blue suit of clothes, strongly guarded with bars of broad gold lace, and he had on his head a bag-wig of considerable size ; the fourth person who made up this party was a middle-aged lady in a robe of yellow damask, and her well-powdered hair adorned with top-knots of various colours.

As soon as the rubber was finished, Nash exclaimed, in a jesting tone :

‘Zounds ! Cheney, what have you and our reverend friend, Mr. Stiff, been doing to have such ill-luck to-night ? I see from your faces that you’ve lost. Egad,’ he added, turning to Squire Boscawen, who was standing near him, ‘Cheney hath just the appearance of one of his fraternity when he sneaks away from a door where he has been told of his patient’s death, and Mr. Stiff looks for all the world as though he were going to preach a funeral sermon for some rich dowager who has left him ten guineas for the job.’

Dr. Cheney only laughed at this sally,

but Mr. Stiff, assuming an air of great dignity, was about to utter some severe answer, when Lieutenant Hawser, for he it was who made the third gentleman of the whist party, exclaimed, with startling energy, addressing himself particularly to the clergyman :

‘Look ye here, Mr. Parson, the luck so far has been all on my side, d’ye see, for the which I’m bounden to my partner here,’ he added, gallantly bowing to Miss Grizel ; ‘but if so be that you would like to try your luck at another rubber, haul up your chair, brother, and take your berth, and steer by the compass, d’ye see, and don’t be chicken-hearted, and may be you’ll not have such foul weather this time.’

‘I am beholden to you, sir, for your offer,’ replied Stiff, in tones of lofty indignation, ‘but I am unable to stay longer this evening, and therefore cannot play another rubber ; meanwhile, I assure you that I am far from being in the dejected state Mr. Nash would have you believe, because I have been the loser of a few paltry pieces.’

‘His majesty is displeased because ’twas not he himself who lightened our purses,’ said Cheney, laughing; ‘the stakes would have been higher an we had played in such distinguished company, but as it is, we need not grieve over a few paltry pieces, as Mr. Stiff so aptly says.’

‘You see how lightly these doctors and parsons talk of guineas,’ said Nash, addressing the laughing group of idlers who loitered round the table; ‘’tis because they get ’em so easily. As for the parsons, everybody knows that they have only the trouble of holding out their hands for their tithes and dues; and the doctors have but to dine at the ordinaries of the hotels and be agreeable to the company, in order to get patients. It is surprising how quickly they ferret out the position, wealth, and ailments of all visitors. Egad,’ added Nash, nodding to Cheney, with a smile, ‘take my word for’t, that among all the secret agents of scandal in Bath, there are none so busy as the physicians.’

‘Sir,’ said Cheney, with assumed pom-

posity, the practice of medicine is not only one of the most laborious, but one of the most honourable professions exercised by man. It is a profession that hath been revered by all nations, and even held sacred in the most polished ages of antiquity. Pray, Mr. Nash, malign not the faculty.'

'I malign the gentlemen of the faculty!' exclaimed Nash, in a tone of affected horror; 'far be such a sin from me! But, ladies and gentlemen, I will only narrate common-place facts.'

'In the recital of which facts you will draw on your fertile imagination again, Nash,' interposed Dr. Cheney.

'Listen,' said Nash, 'while I show you how easily the doctors get their money. Well, now, we have all had visits from the doctor, and so you are all able to judge whether or no I am drawing on my fertile imagination.' He walks into the room with a sedate air, that is a part of his business; feels the sick man's pulse, inspects his tongue, asks the nurse a few questions,

sits down, looks plaguey wise, writes a prescription, finds the golden fee in his hand, and then hurries off to the next patient, and to the next, and the next, and so on through his list, valuing himself upon the number of visits he can make in a morning, and then has no more to do, when he returns home, than unload his pockets,—a mighty pleasant proceeding, by my faith, after all this easy work.'

'To un, Mr. Nash, to un,' cried out Squire Boscawen, with a loud laugh, and taking a large pinch of snuff. 'To un, though he'll give but a scurvy chase.'

'Ay, brother,' said Lieutenant Hawser, addressing the doctor. 'I thought we should grapple you one day.' Then, turning to Mr Nash, he added, 'Ods, my timbers; look ye here shipmate, clap on all your canvas, and don't leave off the chase.'

'Mr. Nash puts it very cleverly, i' faith he does,' said Dr. Cheney, taking no notice of the two last speakers. 'He tells us of all the sweets of a doctor's life, but nothing

of the bitters ; he says nothing of the risks a doctor runs from fever patients, nothing of our being often roused up out of a warm, comfortable bed at midnight, in the depth of winter, to visit a frightened patient, like our friend Nash here, who is going to die if his big toe aches, or some querulous, ill-tempered old dowager, who, perhaps, ails as little, and expects the shivering doctor to be all smiles and agreeable.'

'Pr'ythee, friend Cheney,' replied Nash, briskly, 'tell me why you and your brethren go on dancing attendance on those that have such crabbed tempers ? Now, there's poor Lord George Growler, he is given up, I believe, at last, as past recovery ; a dozen different doctors have gone their rounds with him, but the new ones only asked what the old ones did, so that they might try something else. Lord George Growler has money, you know,' added Nash, looking round with a comical look.

'You've lent him a good douse there, Mr. Nash,' shouted the squire 'To un, to un.'

‘Rank blasphemy!’ exclaimed Dr. Cheney, smiling. ‘Well, well, Nash, I wish I may have you in my hands some day, that’s all. I know what a coward you are when you are stretched on your back in bed.’

‘Avast there, avast,’ said Hawser, addressing Nash and the squire; and then, looking with assumed compassion at the doctor, he added, ‘It’s deuced hard on him to engage three at a time, one upon his bow, one upon his quarter, and one right astern, raking fore and aft. Mayhap, I love fighting as well as other folks, but I can’t bear to see foul play; may I be cut into four pieces and put into the devil’s pickling tub if I can! so I’ll just sheer off, and hark’e, brother, cheer up and put your trust in heaven, and steer by the compass.’

‘Then,’ continued Nash, not noticing the interruptions, ‘there are some disciples of Æsculapius who get their fees for literally doing nothing. They are so afraid of killing a patient, especially if he be a rich one, that they prescribe nothing

but what will do him neither good nor harm; they leave Nature to make her own cure, and i' faith, she is, perhaps, the best doctor.'

'O la, Mr. Nash!' exclaimed Miss Grizel, with a slight shudder, 'how can you talk so? I can't abide to hear you. I vow I shan't dare ever to be ill again.'

'Then'—and here Nash looked with an air of assumed sympathy at Miss Grizel—'how can a poor patient know what they prescribe? They write their prescriptions in Latin, not at full length, mind ye, but in those convenient abbreviations, invented by them to cover their ignorance of syntax, and to mystify their patients. I would defy any one to understand 'em; and, egad, the doctors have reason in this, for what is medicine without mystery? What would be the value of a prescription if it were written in vulgar English? Don't be ill again, miss, I beseech you.'

At this moment an angry exclamation, coupled with an oath, uttered by a young man playing at the next table, attracted

the attention of Nash, and stayed any further raillery, on his part, against the members of the medical faculty, for he abruptly quitted his friends, and walking to the other table, remained there watching the players, more particularly the young man whose loud voice and menacing looks had attracted him to the spot.

He was little better than a youth, wearing his own fair hair, which overshadowed a fine open forehead. Naturally, his face had a candid and pleasant expression, and his dark-blue eyes beamed with frankness and intelligence; but, alas! the demon of play held him captive, and his countenance bore marks of the fierce passions that had burned into his soul.

His brows were contracted, his cheeks haggard and sunken, and his once bright eyes bloodshot and dim, save when they were lit up with a fiery, ravening look, like the glare of a hungry wolf, as he watched the gold pieces on the table, the last remnants of his fortune, melting away from him.

And Nash watched him with eyes brimful of pity and sorrow, and suffused with a moisture, drawn there by the pain of his own tender heart, as he gazed at the wretched and infatuated youth ; for, unlike gamesters, Nash, though himself a gamester, was the most disinterested of mankind, his generosity often impelling him to act in opposition to his interest, and when he found a novice in the hands of a sharper, he always took care to forewarn him, and to save him, if possible, from the consequences of his folly.

But in the case of Walter Taylor, the young man of whom we have been speaking, Nash's efforts had been in vain, and hence his concern on his behalf. Taylor had thrown himself into the company of a set of sharpers who frequented Tunbridge, Bath, and other fashionable watering places, and not having the smallest skill in play, he had necessarily become an easy prey.

Something of his story Nash knew : how he was the only child of a widowed mother, entirely dependent upon him for support ;

how he had been her joy, and pride, and happiness in the days of his innocent boyhood and early youth, when his loved presence had lit up with sunshine the shadowy rooms of the old manor house, his ancestral home, which, with the broad acres surrounding it, hung trembling that night, on the chances of the ruinous game of hazard, called 'primero,' in the Card Room at Bath.

Poor, widowed mother! How the heart of the generous Nash bled for her, when he watched the play of the insensate and miserable young man on that, for him, fatal evening. Stake after stake was lost, and won by his opponent, Clarke, a veteran gamester; phlegmatic, cool and reserved, where Taylor was maddened by rage and despair. But the last stake had been played, and the widow's son arose from the table a beggar on the face of the earth!

His face was livid, and drops of moisture stood on his forehead. Some few disjointed remarks he made to Clarke, which only elicited a sneering reply from the man who

had ruined him, and Nash noticed the hasty movement of Taylor's hand to his side, as though in search of his rapier ; but none was there, for Nash had forbidden swords to be worn in the public rooms, and had made a rule that the gentlemen should, before entering, leave their weapons in the charge of the doorkeepers.

Taylor abruptly quitted the chamber, resisting Nash's efforts to detain him ; and for the rest of the evening the kindly King of Bath was sad and preoccupied, pursued by sinister forebodings as to the ultimate fate of Taylor, and with sad thoughts ever directed to the lonely, widowed mother in the home no longer hers.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE YOUNG GAMBLER.

THE last of the gay votaries of fashion had quitted the Card Room, the evening's diversion was over, the few brief hours wherein, at least in one case, a fortune had been lost and won. And what of poor Taylor? Nash asked himself, as he quitted the now silent and deserted room, and made his way down from the Hall into the High Street, bent on calling at the unfortunate young man's lodgings in the Grove, in the hope that he might find him there, and be able to calm his mind in some degree.

The wild look of despair and passion on Taylor's face, when he had rushed from

the Card Room, had pursued the kindly monarch of Bath throughout the subsequent portion of the evening, and he was haunted by the fear, that in the extremity of his misery, this poor misguided youth might lay violent hands upon himself.

With a rapid step Nash proceeded on his way to the Grove. When he reached Cheap Street, the moon had just risen; her beams pale, cold, and watery, like the chill, damp November night, were yet strong enough to light up the numerous windows of the square, and the richly-carved tower of the truly beautiful Abbey, then called the Lantern of England, looming, as it were, over the roof-tops clustering beneath it. But Nash sped rapidly past the grey walls of the noble pile, rich with elaborate carving; some ill-defined fear urged him on, and the sudden clash of weapons, breaking the stillness of the air as he came in sight of the Grove, made his heart bound, and caused a vision to rise up before his eyes of the widow's only child stretched lifeless on the green turf.

Guided by the glare of some torches, more than by the feeble moonlight, rendered more faint just now by a passing cloud, Nash strode hurriedly over the soft, soddened grass to the middle of the Grove, the very spot where, in after-years, he caused the obelisk to be raised to commemorate the restoration to health of the Prince of Orange.

Here and there, in the windows of the tall houses skirting the Grove, a few lights glimmered like stars in the dim moonlight, while the dusky red glare of the torches flashed through the naked branches of the fine old elms, beneath which the combatants were holding a more deadly struggle than they had held but a brief hour since in the Card Room. Then they contended for gain, now 'twas for dear life they fought.

Ill-fated to the last, poor Taylor was surpassed by Clarke; for here, again, Clarke was his adversary in swordsmanship, as he had been at play. Making a furious lounge, with more force than skill, the

youth received Clarke's sword deep into his body, and fell heavily to the ground.

'He is a dead man!' cried out, with one voice, the affrighted holders of the torches.

Mr. Clarke, losing his resentment at the sight of the young man's blood, dropped the point of his sword, and ran up to him, exclaiming,

'I am sorry, sir, for the accident that has happened; I fear you are very much hurt.'

Nash, who had rushed forward, threw himself on his knees beside the prostrate form of Taylor, raised his head, and gazed anxiously on the white upturned face, and the rapidly-glazing eyes.

'This is fine work, truly, Mr. Clarke,' said Nash, in tones of sorrow and indignation. 'You have stripped this poor lad of his fortune, and now you must end by having his blood on your soul.'

''Twas not I sought the fight,' replied Clarke gloomily. 'I found him waiting for me when I left the Guildhall, and nothing would serve him but that we should cross swords; his blood is on his own head.'

‘Too true,’ gasped the dying man; ‘he hath fought fair; whatever his play was. Fly,’ he added, ‘save yourself, Mr. Clarke, while there is yet time.’

‘Ay, be off with you,’ exclaimed Nash; ‘the constables will be here directly.’

Without another word Clarke turned on his heel, but ere the sound of his footsteps had died away, the soul of the poor youth he had ruined had fled; his last look, one of unspeakable anguish, which haunted Nash for many a year; his last words, uttered in tones of bitter sorrow and remorse,

‘My poor mother!’

END OF VOL. I.





